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TOYOTA DEALERS POST RECORD YEAR, PG 8

Tonight's Jackpot
$14,000,000
estimated
LOTTO 649

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TORONTO • WEDNESDAY, JANU 14, 2009 metrone

Celebrity Buzz

Rourke wrestling steroids scandal
pg 30

Wanted: Lazy blogger to enjoy island

JOB POST Position: Island caretaker. Duties: Lazing around Australia's Great Barrier Reef for six months. Salary: About $122,000.

It sounds too good to be true, but it's for real.

Billing it the "Best Job in the World," Australian tourism officials are seeking one person to spend six months relaxing on Hamilton Island while promoting the destination on a blog. Within 24 hours, more than 200,000 had clicked onto the website advertising the sweet gig.

Australia's Tourism Minister Desley Boyle said the campaign had reached 29 million people through television and print media coverage — worth millions of dollars in publicity.

While the ad is a stunt, the job is still genuine. Applicants must submit a 60-second video, and 11 finalists will be flown from their home countries to Hamilton Island in May for the final selection process.

Applications are open until Feb. 22. The job begins July 1. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

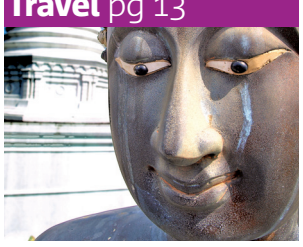
Metro Drive pg 11

Detroit show keeps its cool

Workology pg 22

Secret life of a private eye

Travel pg 13



Beyond travel advisories

NHL **Preds blank Buds**

PAWEL DWULIT/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Toronto Maple Leaf Dominic Moore gets tied up with Nashville Predator Vernon Fiddler after a faceoff in the first period of their game at the Air Canada Centre in Toronto last night. The Leafs, who entered the game with the NHL's worst penalty-killing unit, were beaten 2-0 by the Predators. More coverage, page 9.

Excessive lead levels found in GTA homes

Drinking water above limit in half of older houses tested

Drinking water in more than half of 100 older Toronto homes tested last summer exceeded the acceptable level of lead — nearly nine times as many as in the previous study.

While water officials attribute the spike to warm weather in the second round of tests, high lead levels at the tap highlight a longstanding problem with lead service lines leading to homes in older parts of the city.

Those aging pipes, installed sometime before 1955, could be putting up to 65,000 households at risk.

When the first-ever round of provincially mandated testing on homes with lead service lines was done between December 2007 and April 2008, only six of the 100 homes tested had levels above the provincial standard of 10 parts per billion.

But the second round of tests, last July to October, found water in 52 homes exceeded that level. One reading was as high as 82 parts per billion — eight times the acceptable level.

Toronto Water blames the difference in the two rounds of tests on the effects of warmer weather, which causes more corrosion of lead pipes.

"Lead is like any metal; it corrodes. Bits of it release into water at microscopic levels. When the water is warmer this process happens more rapidly," Toronto Water general manager Lou Di Gironimo said. He expects the numbers to drop in a new round of testing now underway.

Homeowners whose readings were high were notified, along with public health officials.

Dr. Howard Shapiro, associate medical officer of health, doesn't believe there's cause for panic.

"The summer is when it's at its worst. Actual exposure over the year will be less than that," Shapiro said.

But he added public health officials will be getting out the word: "We need to do more communication with people about this issue because it is more widespread."

Testing was done on homes built before the 1950s in older parts of Toronto, Scarborough and Etobicoke. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

How to limit lead exposure

- Lead can seriously harm intellectual and behavioural developments of infants, young children and fetuses.
- Exposure in drinking water can be limited by running the tap for at least five minutes if it hasn't been used for six hours.

ShareYourViews
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Police ordered to release e-records

COURT Municipal government institutions must produce any electronically stored information the public has a right to see, even if it requires using their technical expertise to develop new software, the Ontario Court of Appeal has ruled.

In a 3-0 decision yesterday, the court ordered the Toronto Police Services Board to respond "immediately" to requests from Toronto Star reporter Jim Rankin for information stored in two electronic databases, documenting contacts between citizens and police.

Yesterday's decision marks the first time the court has ruled on the scope of the public's and the media's right to access electronic records held by municipal government institutions through freedom of information requests, said Tony Wong, a lawyer for the Star.

Ruling

- Ann Cavoukian, Ontario's information and privacy commissioner, called yesterday's decision a "landmark" ruling that says principles of openness and transparency apply to electronic as well as paper records.

Rankin began seeking the information in 2003 to test a Toronto police claim that officers do not engage in racial profiling.

Police refused the request, saying it would be time-consuming and require the use of a special computer program to replace personal information, such as names, with numbers.

The decision quashes an earlier ruling from the Divisional Court, which, in effect, said the public can only access electronic government records if they can be produced using the kind of software the municipal institution normally relies on.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Free Daily News Group Inc., operating as Metro Toronto 1 Concorde Gate, Suite 703, Toronto, Ontario M3C 3N6. Publisher: Bill McDonald

Grow-op tunnel suspect turns himself in
A Toronto man who allegedly used a metre-long tunnel between two west-end houses to expand a marijuana grow operation has turned himself in. Police found the tunnel on King George Road on Jan. 6. Domenico Micelli, 43, faces charges. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Local

Violent crime spree leads to arrest

A Brampton man is accused of a violent robbery spree that targeted Toronto and Vaughan businesses over six days last March. It started in Vaughan on March 12 when a man jumped a Weston Road convenience store clerk and demanded cash with a knife. Five days later, in Toronto, a Plymouth Voyager was stolen and gas was later stolen from a Shell station. An hour later, a Hasty Market was robbed and, the next day, a knife-point robbery took place at a Coffee Time. Ather Hanna, 26, is charged with three counts of robbery. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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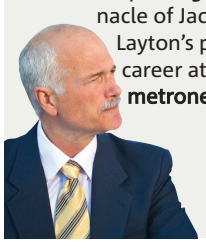
Tomorrow's Metro

Comment
Andrew Cohen brings his controversial take on events at home and abroad to tomorrow's Metro.

metronews.ca

What's online today.

Video Planned Gitmo shutdown raises questions about Omar Khadr's future at **metronews.ca/canada**
Video EnCana offers $500,000 reward for information on pipeline bombings at **metronews.ca/canada**
Comment An Obama administration will change little about U.S. policy in Gaza at **metronews.ca/columns**
Political Stripes 2008 could end up being the pinnacle of Jack Layton's political career at **metronews.ca**



Lotteries

Ontario Pick 3: 9 9 3; **Ontario Pick 4** : 9 4 0 6.
Encore: 7857326
Daily Keno: 1, 2, 7, 10, 14, 15, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 35, 38, 41, 47, 49, 53, 58 and 68.
These results are not official.

Another dog electrocuted

Second area canine killed in as many months

He would have done anything to save his dying dog.

Without hesitating, Dusko Avramovic knelt on the slushy sidewalk early yesterday morning, pressing his lips to his Labradoodle named Mrak in a frantic attempt to deliver mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

"Anybody would do it for him," Avramovic, 55, said. "He was a wonderful dog, a member of the family."

Out for a 2 a.m. walk with Avramovic's son, Darjan, Mrak dropped to the ground in anguished squeals after trotting over a metal hydro plate in the sidewalk. He was instantly electrocuted.

The plate, at the foot of a bus shelter near Annette and Keele streets, covers a junction box containing wires that feed equipment, such as traffic lights.

It short-circuited, Hydro officials said yesterday, giving the plate an electric charge.

Avramovic also received a shock when he pulled the dog from the plate to perform CPR.

Mrak is the second canine casualty of an electric shock within a two-block radius in the past two months.

Hydro crews disabled the faulty box yesterday morning and officials will trace all the electrical feeds to determine what went wrong.

Officials say the investigation could take a few days.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

COLIN MCCONNELL/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Workers try to identify the source of live electricity yesterday at the corner of Keele and Annette. A second dog in as many months was killed by electrocution.

News in brief

INFRASTRUCTURE Federal Infrastructure Minister John Baird will meet with big-city mayors in Ottawa tomorrow and says he will unveil reforms aimed at fast-tracking infrastructure projects, such as environmental assessments.

VIDEO The Canadian Jewish Congress will release video footage today that it says will "expose incidents of incitement to hatred and violence" by demonstrators at several recent pro-Palestinian rallies held in cities across the country. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

The brain behind the campaign

United States
Presidential
Inauguration

POLITICS He's credited as the mastermind of the most successful U.S. presidential campaign in recent history.

But as U.S. president-elect Barack Obama gets ready to take office next week, David Plouffe, who is not part of the presidential transition team, says he has no intention of joining the administration.

Instead, he's turned to the public speaking circuit and writing, with plans to author a book called The Audacity To Win about his strategies in the 2008 campaign. Plouffe laid out some of the campaign successes during yesterday's speech at the Economic Club of Canada in Toronto that at times seemed aimed almost entirely at political junkies. He credited most to that success to technology

"Technology was the driver for us ... the way we used it to deliver our message to people," Plouffe said. THE CANADIAN PRESS

FRANK GUNN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

David Plouffe, Barack Obama's campaign manager

City issues extreme cold weather alert

HOMELESS The cold makes people do funny things. GO Transit blasts its tracks with glorified blow driers. Sand replaces salt as the street slickness solution. Trains are shuttled inside for shelter.

All because of a blast of Arctic air. And it's only going to get worse: Tomorrow's high is –17 C.

The city issued an extreme cold weather alert yesterday, opening an additional 160 beds in shelters throughout Toronto. That's on top of the 3,800 beds already available.

Outreach efforts, meanwhile, were tripled. Six staff, divided among three vans, spent the night driving the homeless to shelters throughout the city.

The cold weather alert is expected to last until Saturday. Until then, the city is expected to stay in emergency mode.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

York strike could end next week

VOTE York spokesperson Alex Bilyk said yesterday that if both contract faculty and teaching assistants accept the offer next week, classes could resume as early as next Thursday, with the final decision to be made by the executive committee of York's senate.

The local CUPE isn't as optimistic, urging a return to the bargaining table.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Cracked drainage pipe causes big problems
A cracked drainage pipe caused about $200,000 water damage to the Rathburn Road Etobicoke Olympium on Saturday. Despite the damage the pools remain open. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

School board will review Atwood book

COMPLAINT Toronto's public school board is reviewing Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale after one complaint from a parent whose child was studying the novel in a Grade 12 class.

While the board would not discuss the nature of the concern over the 1985 dystopian novel — described by some educators as a staple of its genre that is used nationwide — a source said it was believed to be over sexuality and criticism of religious fundamentalism.

History

- The last time the Toronto District School Board faced a similar controversy was in 2006 when the Canadian Jewish Congress lobbied boards to restrict access to Three Wishes by Deborah Ellis, complaining about its portrayal of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

According to board policy, it is obliged to investigate any complaint about a book that can't be resolved at the school level. The process involves a committee of roughly eight experts and a community member, and it is time consuming.

The review committee meets tomorrow at Lawrence Park Collegiate, where the complaint originated. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

CARLOS OSORIO/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Scarborough community council voted yesterday to add a Metro grocery store at the corner of Victoria Park Avenue and Ellesmere Road to its list of heritage properties in the city.

Store gets heritage status

Scarborough building's arched roof called distinctive

Toronto's newest nominee as a heritage property is a unique Scarborough supermarket.

The Metro store, built in 1958 with a distinctive curved roofline, sits in the Parkway Mall at Victoria Park Avenue and Ellesmere Road.

Scarborough community council voted without dissent yesterday to ask that it be added to the city's list of heritage properties.

Some might wonder why a 1950s suburban supermarket should be considered a heritage building. Local Coun. Michael Thompson (Ward 37, Scarborough Centre) is not one of them.

"Anyone who has ever been in this area knows about that landmark that identifies this particular community," Thompson said, adding he was asked about the building recently in British Columbia by someone who had seen it on a visit to Toronto.

City heritage staff agree, calling it a "rare example of a late 20th-century commercial building."

Doesn't provide protection

- Listing the store as a heritage property doesn't confer any protection, but it would mean heritage staff would have to be notified of any plans to redevelop the site. The decision took on recent importance as the mall owners have discussed redesigning the property.

The store, designed by Toronto architects Bregman and Hamman, "demonstrates a high degree of technical achievement," a staff report says.

"The arched roof that is the most distinctive feature of the design contains what was described as the largest wood arch assembled in Canada at that time."

It has operated under the banners of Grand Union, Steinberg's, Miracle Food Mart, Dominion and Metro. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Vaughan committee chair Bernie DiVona at yesterday's council meeting.

Vaughan council picks up where it left off in '08

POLITICS Vaughan Mayor Linda Jackson's weekend announcement of a new policy of transparency and co-operation at city hall doesn't appear to have won respect from her mutinous councillors.

In the first city council meeting of the new year, the embattled Jackson found herself blindsided by a priorities plan for the year that had been crafted by councillors and added to the agenda without her knowledge.

Then, her attempt to fine-tune Coun. Bernie DiVona's proposal to post expense claims online for public view was rebuffed by council and deferred to the audit committee for consideration.

The mayor is currently fighting council's plans to lay charges against her over alleged election finance irregularities. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

News in brief

DRUNK DRIVING A Mississauga father of two young children deserves jail for driving drunk and killing a taxi driver, a prosecutor said yesterday at a Brampton sentencing hearing. Caleb Harrison, 35, who was convicted last year of impaired driving causing death in the July 2, 2005, crash that killed Michael Rayment, 44, of Milton, will be sentenced March 4. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Court hears testimony of alleged HIV spreading

CRIME A retired flight attendant who contracted HIV after having repeated unprotected sex with a man she met in her apartment building says he lied about his health.

William Imona-Russel later siphoned $9,000 from her bank account and raped her twice, once threatening to kill her with a power drill, said the woman, 58, who cannot be identified.

"I was terrified ... for my life," the woman testified yesterday on closed-circuit television to avoid seeing her former boyfriend in the courtroom next door.

She is not being named for her safety.

Within a month, they started having sex and she said she never saw him use a condom. She told prosecutor Julia Forward that she asked him if he had any kind of disease. "He said no, he's healthy."

Imona-Russel, 35, has pleaded not guilty to charges that include aggravated sexual assault to endanger life, assault and threatening death. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

An unrelated stabbing death

- In July 2006, Imona-Russel was charged with first-degree murder in a stabbing death. His trial starts this year.

Family of missing girl ups reward

HONG KONG Two months after 30-year-old Toronto paralegal Ani Ashekian went missing in Hong Kong her family still has no idea where she is.

The family has increased their reward for information to $15,785 and set up a Facebook page. The last time they heard from Ani was a text message on Nov. 10. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Nova Scotia maverick MP chooses retirement
Nova Scotia maverick MP Bill Casey says he won't run in the next federal election. The former Conservative — who became an Independent after being dumped by Prime Minister Stephen Harper — says it's "time to explore new directions." METRO NEWS SERVICES

Canada

'Persons of interest' ID'd

The RCMP has identified "persons of interest" in connection with four gas pipeline bombings in northeastern British Columbia as EnCana, the company being targeted, offered a $500,000 reward yesterday.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

PM 'delighted' Obama to visit

POLITICS Prime Minister Stephen Harper says he's "delighted" that Barack Obama's first foreign visit will be to Canada.

Four of the last seven U.S. presidents have chosen Canada for their first international trip, although George W. Bush wasn't one of them. He visited Mexico first when he became president eight years ago.

When asked what Bush's legacy would be, Harper wouldn't answer, but he did say he always found Bush willing to hear Canadian concerns.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Vancouver **Olympic stamps**

DARRYL DYCK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Children meet games mascot Quatchi yesterday after stamps honouring the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games were unveiled in Vancouver.

Major spending ahead

NDP not convinced of upcoming budget

Finance Minister Jim Flaherty, who has long opposed government rescue packages, is confirming privately that his Jan. 27 budget will contain major spending to try to bolster the economy, the New Democrats say.

NDP finance critic Thomas Mulcair said Flaherty claimed in a closed-door chat last night to have undergone a real conversion on the need for government spending.

But after the 90-minute pre-budget discussion, Mulcair said he is far from convinced the Conservatives will fulfil Prime Minister Stephen Harper's recent promise to pump billions of dollars into the staggering economy.

Both Harper and Flaherty have a long record of being precisely against that, Mulcair told reporters.

In Toronto, NDP Leader Jack Layton met privately with newly installed interim Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff to talk about the Liberal-NDP alliance that is threatening to topple Harper and take power as a coalition government.

"Is it possible that we will support the budget?" Mulcair asked reporters.

"Look, let's be realistic. Based on what the Conservatives have said and done in the past, it's very unlikely that we will do that."

But he said he's not ruling it out completely.

"Miracles can always happen."

News in brief

BAILOUT Alberta's premier is making a plea for Ottawa to address all industries affected by the current economic crisis instead of focusing on the Ontario-based auto sector.

ENVIRONMENT Ontario's draft for a Lake Simcoe Protection Plan released yesterday says it will create a healthy future for the lake by limiting shoreline development, decreasing pollutants and returning its fish population to vigorous levels.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Better bandwidth for northwestern Ontario
Towns across northwestern Ontario will be getting faster, improved cellphone and Internet in the coming months. THE CANADIAN PRESS

CIDA on hot seat over wine, lingerie money to China

A foreign aid program that gave a big Niagara winery $108,000 to study icewine prospects in China is being reviewed by the Harper government.

The same business partnership program handed over $103,000 to a Montreal company to run a sewing factory in China that makes women's sleepwear and lingerie.

Critics have questioned why the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) still sends aid to one of the world's emerging economic superpowers.

The agency's industrial co-operation program, which matches Canadian companies with job-creating partners overseas, has been an especially broad target for skeptics and auditors.

And federal officials are asking if it's the best use of funds desperately needed in the world's poorest countries.

"We want to make sure that our aid dollars bring results — maximum results," said Jean-Luc Benoit, spokesman for International Development Minister Bev Oda.

A decision on the controversy is expected in the spring, Benoit said.

CIDA publicly claimed the program drew investments worth more than $10 billion into recipient countries and racked up sales of Canadian goods worth $6 billion.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

DAVID CHIDLEY/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Icewine grapes are harvested in Niagara-on-the-Lake last year.

News in brief

SECURITIES A Canadian securities regulator wouldn't be "Toronto-centric," says Tom Hockin, the head of a panel that has recommended that all 13 provincial and territorial regulators be united under one body, making the case for a single national securities regulator in Calgary, where opposition to the idea is most vehement. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Pentagon says former Guantanamo prisoners returning to battlefield

The Pentagon says the number of Guantanamo Bay prisoners who rejoined terrorist missions after being released is on the rise. Spokesman Geoff Morrell said yesterday that 61 former inmates are believed as of last month to have returned to the fight against the United States since being released. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

World

Midwest faces cold blast

An Arctic blast has descended on much of the American Midwest and caused temperatures to plummet, with record-breaking lows approaching – 40 C in parts of North Dakota.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Top Israeli official to seek truce

Hamas awaits Defence Ministry representative in Egypt

Israel's chief negotiator will go to Egypt for "decisive" talks on a ceasefire with Hamas, officials said yesterday, as the sound of battles between Israeli troops and Palestinian fighters rang out in the crowded streets of Gaza City.

With international outrage mounting over the toll on Gaza's civilians, Israel's decision to send Defence Ministry official Amos Gilad to Egypt tomorrow could be a signal of progress. Gilad had postponed the trip for days.

Diplomatic efforts to end 18 days of fighting have moved slowly, in part because of the wide gaps between Israel and Hamas, who do not negotiate directly.

Israel says it will push forward with the offensive until Hamas ends all rocket fire on southern Israel, and there are guarantees the group will stop smuggling weapons into Gaza through the porous Egyptian border.

Hamas has said it will only observe a ceasefire if Israel withdraws from Gaza.

Much of the diplomacy focuses on an area of southern Gaza just across the Egyptian border that serves as a weapons smuggling route, making Egypt critical to both sides in any deal.

Israel wants smuggling tunnels along the border sealed and monitored as part of any deal, and has been bombing the tunnels throughout the campaign.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Palestinian fatalities

- Gaza hospital officials say more than 900 Palestinians, half of them civilians, have been killed over more than two weeks of fighting between Israel and Hamas.

Biden discusses Iraq withdrawal

MILITARY Iraqi officials say U.S. vice-president-elect Joe Biden has told them that the incoming U.S. administration wants a responsible troop withdrawal from Iraq that does not risk recent security gains.

A new security agreement provides for a complete U.S. troop pullout by 2012.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mom, 4 children discovered slain

DEATHS The bodies of a woman and four young children, believed to range in age from two to seven, have been found in a central Oklahoma apartment.

Authorities say all five deaths appear to be the result of homicide. The victims' identities or the causes of death have not been released, but authorities say they are looking for the woman's missing car.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington **Confirmation hearing**

GERALD HERBERT/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S. Secretary of State-designate Hillary Rodham Clinton, accompanied by her daughter Chelsea Clinton, listens to introductory remarks on Capitol Hill in Washington yesterday during her confirmation hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Man who may have faked own death fled on bike

MYSTERY The search for an Indiana businessman who may have tried to fake his own death in a plane crash to escape financial problems took another cinematic turn yesterday when investigators said he fled on a red motorcycle.

After searching the Alabama woods where Marcus Schrenker, 38, apparently bailed out of his small plane before letting it coast on autopilot to crash in Florida, investigators discovered that he had stashed a red motorcycle inside a storage unit a day before the crash. The bike is gone, and his clothes were left behind.

"He could be anywhere at all. Within 10 hours he could be in New Orleans, halfway to Houston, in Atlanta, anywhere," said Hapersville police Chief David Latimer.

"He could be anywhere at all."
David Latimer

In the days before the crash, Schrenker's home and business had been searched by authorities investigating his financial management businesses, his wife filed for divorce, his stepfather died, and a court in Maryland entered a half-million-dollar judgment against him.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pal defends Prince Charles amidst new racism row

CONTROVERSY A friend of Prince Charles insisted yesterday that the prince is not racist after a newspaper reported that the heir to the throne refers to him as "Sooty."

Kolin Dhillon, a wealthy property developer originally from India, said the nickname used by Charles and other players at the Cirencester Polo Club in west England was a term of affection.

The Daily Telegraph newspaper reported yesterday that both Charles and his sons William and Harry call Dhillon "Sooty" and claimed the term was offensive.

Most Britons know the term "Sooty" from a 1950s children's television program that featured a glove puppet in the shape of a teddy bear with the same name.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

News in brief

INDONESIA A rescue team guided by a survivor was dispatched into Indonesian waters yesterday in search of dozens said to be still alive after a ferry capsized with more than 250 on board on Sunday.

DISPUTE The woman whose estranged husband is demanding $1.5 million US for the kidney he gave her during happier times denies accusations she was unfaithful.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Comment & Views

Comment

Paul's Senate resumé

Columnist believes he was overlooked by PM Harper

TheWestView

Paul Sullivan
Journalist & Media Consultant

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

I see you have started appointing journalists to the Senate and I think it's about time you put away those fussy old Reform party ideas about a so-called "Triple E" senate and take to padding it with the same cynical relish as your Tory predecessor Brian Mulroney, who, in 1990, appointed eight senators in a single day in order to get the GST rammed through.

I'm just sending this note to let you know that I'm making myself available. I know you've got another round of appointments scheduled in March and I don't want to miss out.

Obviously, you didn't know I was available when you made your most recent picks. If Mike Duffy gets to climb into a nice cosy Upper Chamber seat and doze off, why shouldn't I be next in line? I mean, my qualifications are a match for his. And unlike Mike, I wouldn't need the extra chair.

ADRIAN WYLD/THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE PHOTO

Columnist Paul Sullivan is lobbying Prime Minister Stephen Harper for a seat in the Senate.

Look, I'm at least as old as he is. Some would say washed up, but that's cruel and unkind. I prefer to think that I'm seasoned and experienced, like Mike.

Like Mike, I have the ability to form instant opinions out of thin air and communicate them wisely and gravely. I can even do that little head move he has that simulates thoughtfulness. Ideal in a senator, who can say or think whatever he or she likes in confidence that it will be ignored because no one ever listens to a senator.

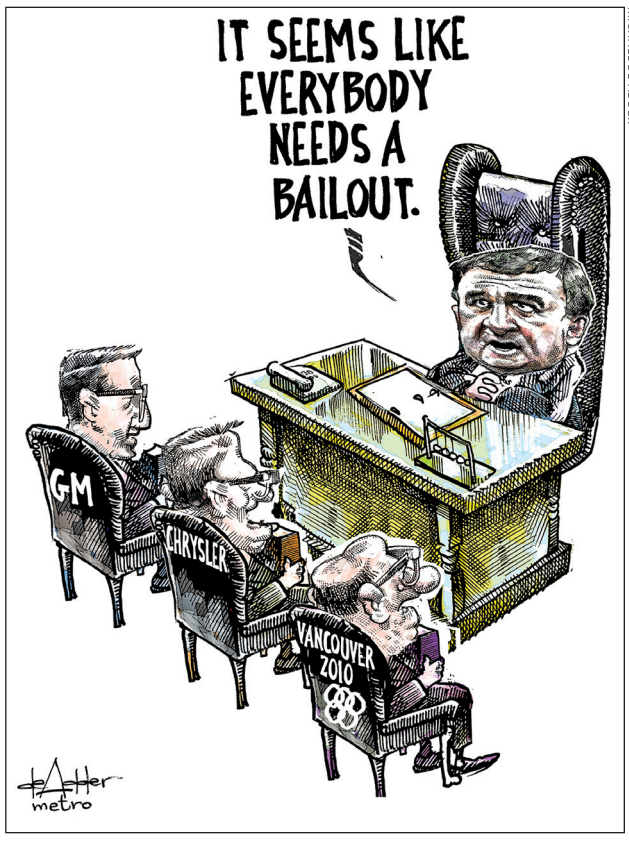
Like Mike, I have absolutely no actual experience in government or governing, so I have no idea how hard it is for MPs who actually have to get elected by the population at large rather than get appointed by a grateful prime minister. I also have no intention of finding out.

I also understand the Senate meets for 90 days a year and senators can miss 21 of those days before any penalties apply, which means I only have to turn up once every five days or so and still get the $130,000 per annum cash and perks. So I won't be hanging around getting in the way.

You can rest assured that I have never said or reported anything of any consequence that might embarrass you, so I am eminently qualified to cash in and I am more than willing to serve until 75, which, sadly, is only 17 years away. Time is of the essence! Don't worry about the collapse of the economy or the fact that your minority government is hanging by a frayed thread of national sufferance — the time is always right to hand out the pork to your real friends.

Yours in journalistic and Parliamentary integrity,
Paul

Paul Sullivan is a Vancouver-based journalist and owner of Sullivan Media Consulting.



MICHAEL DE ADDER

Letters

'Simple' solution to end problems in the Mideast

It is simple how the current problems in Gaza can be solved. Hamas can stop its deliberate targeting of Israeli civilians, which number more than 10,000 missiles in the past eight years and more than 500 in the so-called recent truce.

Israel will not have to finally respond and will stop targeting the Hamas terrorists that hide amongst the Arab civilians of Gaza. The UN can assist by not employing Hamas members on its staff and allowing use of UN resources. After that, having seized control of Gaza by violent means, Hamas should concentrate on creating the theocratic state that it claims it yearns for.

MICHAEL BAIGEL, TORONTO

Word on the street: Do you think polygamy should be illegal?

John Baillie
age 72, Toronto

A: Yes, it should be illegal. It's against society and everything. It's disgusting.

Odiana Knight
age 62, Toronto

A: I would say no. People are practising it anyway — that's why divorce rates are sky high. It might keep more families together in a harmonious way.

Carlo D'amico
age 37, Montreal

A: Yes, it should be illegal. I was raised in having just one partner in my life and I don't see how I'd be able to devote myself to multiple wives.

Tram Danh
age 19, Vancouver

A: I think it should be illegal. Why should men have more than one wife? It's unfair and a double standard.

Ali Souliman
age 21, Ottawa

A: In our society, in Canada, I think it's not possible. I'm Muslim, I could have four wives, but I'm not going to because I'm westernized.

Emily Forrest
age 35, Halifax

A: Perhaps it should be illegal because the women suffer. If somebody's getting hurt, that's where I stand.

Matt Carruthers
age 19, Ottawa

A: I think it should be legal, but it all comes down to the individual. If you want to have one husband and he has many wives, that's up to her. It all has to be consensual, of course.

Magali Perrault
age 27, Ottawa

A: I think that our customs are against polygamy, so in Canada we should not have polygamy, but we have a lot of immigrants that are actually practising this.

Andrew Hamm
age 24, Halifax

A: I think polygamy itself shouldn't be illegal, but there should be restrictions on age. It's a religious belief, and making it illegal infringes on that belief.

It's your turn to tell others what you think. E-mail your thoughts and opinions to: torontoletters@metronews.ca
Letters must include sender's full name, address and phone number – street name and phone numbers will NOT be published. We reserve the right to edit letters.

Slump may mean operating loss for electronics giant Sony

Sony's shares plunged yesterday on reports that the Japanese electronics maker is sinking into its first yearly operating loss in 14 years as sales fizzle for digital cameras, flat-panel TVs and other gadgets — just weeks after Toyota forecast its first annual operating loss in 70 years. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Business

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ADVANCING GENERICS

Flaherty widens team

Non-bank lenders get voice at credit talks

Finance Minister Jim Flaherty is expanding his new working group on credit to include other stakeholders, a move that gave non-bank lenders their first voice at the table yesterday as the parties huddled for secret talks in Toronto.

Flaherty himself was not present, but an industry source said executives from individual banks, along with the Canadian Bankers Association, met with their counterparts from Desjardins, Canada's largest co-operative financial group, and Credit Union Central of Canada.

The issue of credit availability for business and consumers remains top of mind for the group. It was unclear whether the financial co-operatives would take up permanent seats or function as observers.

Still, their invitation to participate was another hint the federal government could take more action to bolster credit when it reveals its budget on Jan. 27. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Background

- Flaherty created the group last week in response to mounting complaints about access to credit. Bank executives and government officials were charged with exploring solutions to make loans more accessible.

Toyota dealers defy industry gloom

Toyota dealers across the country are smiling despite the turmoil in the auto industry.

While dealers for some manufacturers are struggling because of a big sales slump and too many stores, Toyota retailers sold more autos than ever last year.

Toyota's 239 dealers across the country sold an average of 875 cars and trucks in 2008, far more than any other company, statistics from DesRosiers Automotive Consultants showed yesterday.

It represented an 11 per cent increase for Toyota dealers from 2007 and a 68 per cent jump in average annual sales since 2000. The increase also marks the first time that an automaker has sold more than 800 vehicles per store in Canadian history. "The success of their product was a key part of reaching this level," said DesRosiers president Dennis DesRosiers. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

In brief

SCIENTISTS Pfizer Inc., the world's biggest drug company, is laying off 800 scientists in its latest effort to refocus disappointing research efforts and cut overhead ahead of an anticipated crash in revenue.

SALE Bank of Montreal is paying $375 million for the Canadian life insurance business of American International Group as the world's biggest insurer restructures after its near collapse. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Plunging oil prices narrow Canada's trade surplus

NUMBERS Canada's trade surplus with the rest of the world narrowed to $1.3 billion in November, the lowest in 11 years, as exports and imports tumbled.

The trade numbers, which came in below economists' expectations, were driven in part by a steep drop in oil prices, Statistics Canada said. The agency also revised October's trade surplus downward to $2.3 billion, from a previously reported $3.8 billion.

Exports dipped 6.8 per cent in November to $39.2 billion — the fourth consecutive monthly decline — as a result of lower prices and volumes. Imports fell 4.8 per cent to $38 billion, also due to price and volume declines. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Rolle chooses Oxford over NFL

Florida State University defensive back Myron Rolle, right, will not enter this spring's NFL draft, opting instead to attend Oxford University in England for a year to study medical anthropology on a Rhodes Scholarship. Rolle plans to enter the 2010 draft. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Sports

"I feel like crap ... I have a tough time dealing with it year after year."

Former Major League pitcher Bert Blyleven, left, to ESPN Radio yesterday on being passed over for the Baseball Hall of Fame for the 12th straight year. Blyleven compiled a 287-250 record with a 3.31 ERA and 3,701 strikeouts in a 22-year career, mostly with the Twins.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

JOHN.CHICK@METRONEWS.CA

Sports in brief

Lowe

MLB The Atlanta Braves, working to bolster their rotation, are closing in on a $60-million US, four-year deal with Derek Lowe, according to a person familiar with the negotiations.

NHL Tampa Bay Lightning star Vincent Lecavalier has addressed rumours that he could be headed to Montreal in a trade. "I grew up with the Canadiens," Lecavalier told Montreal's La Presse newspaper. "I understand there are a lot of rumours ... but they are rumours." Lightning GM Brian Lawton told the St. Petersburg Times Monday that Lecavalier is not being shopped. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

NBA A man who worked as a driver for Eddy Curry is suing the New York Knicks centre, alleging Curry owes him money, sexually harassed him and berated him with racist slurs. Curry denies the allegations. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

HOCKEY A northern Ontario community is in mourning after a teenage hockey player died following an on-ice collision. The player, 16-year-old Kristopher Meshake, was taken to hospital in Thunder Bay following the mishap. Meshake died on the weekend. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

Sullivan bites Leafs

NHL RESULT

Predators 2 Maple Leafs 0

VS

Steve Sullivan had his first NHL point in almost two years to help the Nashville Predators blank the Toronto Maple Leafs 2-0 last night.

Playing just his second game of the season after missing the entire 2007-08 campaign and half of this one with a back injury, Sullivan assisted on the third-period game-winning goal by Radek Bonk.

DAVE SANDFORD/GETTY IMAGES

Tomas Kaberle defends against former teammate Wade Belak last night.

David Legwand ripped an insurance goal with just less than seven minutes left while Pekka Rinne made 17 stops to record the shutout in the Nashville net.

Sullivan played just more than 12 minutes in Nashville's win over Chicago last Saturday before sitting out the return date in Chicago Sunday night.

The onetime Leaf, a native of Timmins, Ont., had a goal and an assist for Nashville in a loss to Montreal on Feb. 22, 2007. It was his last game before his comeback. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

SCOREBOARD

NHL

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Nashville 2 **TORONTO** 0
Boston 3 Montreal 1
Edmonton 5 Washington 2
Columbus 4 Colorado 3
N.Y. Rangers 2 N.Y. Islanders 1
Pittsburgh 4 Philadelphia 2
Ottawa 5 Carolina 1
Phoenix at Minnesota
St. Louis at Calgary
New Jersey at Vancouver
Tampa Bay at San Jose

NBA

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Charlotte 80 Detroit 78
Miami 99 Minnesota 96
Cleveland 102 Memphis 87
L.A. Lakers at Houston
Dallas at Denver
Atlanta at Phoenix
Orlando at Sacramento

For more sports, visit www.metronews.ca/sports

Decisions for NHLPA

The NHL Players Association intends to divulge before month's end whether it will:

A) End its collective bargaining agreement with the NHL or extend it another two seasons;

B) Fire former superstar Eric Lindros as its ombudsman or retain him.

Hockey sources predicted in chats with Metro yesterday that the NHLPA will announce during the All-Star Game in Montreal that its player representatives are choosing to extend the agreement. The CBA that ended the 2004-05 NHL lockout gave the players the option to either terminate the existing agreement next September or extend it two more seasons.

The sources said players are not interested in a major labour battle during these troubling economic times, already have voted to extend the existing agreement and intend to enthusiastically announce their decision in Montreal.

At the same time, the sources said, the union might announce the firing of Lindros. They said his firing is possible because of a major division in the NHLPA over his contributions.

Union executives won't publicly discuss Lindros but some say privately he's caused rifts and has improperly handled his job.

YorkReport

Marty York

marty.york@metronews.ca

In the CFL, Mike Benevides stunned the Argonauts recently by rejecting their offer to become Toronto's head coach, but his decision may well be a blessing for his predecessor with the B.C. Lions.

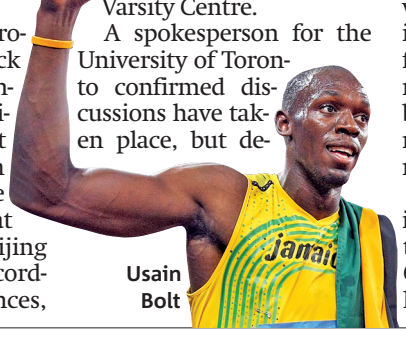
Dave Ritchie, who left B.C. before last season and was replaced as the team's defensive co-ordinator by Benevides, has been contacted by the Argos and has emerged as one of the top two candidates for the job. The other is Bart Andrus, an assistant coach with the NFL's Tennessee Titans.

If Andrus is chosen, the Argos will try to recruit Ritchie as assistant head coach and defensive co-ordinator. Ritchie, 70, spent 25 years in Canada as a head and assistant coach and his knowledge of the league could help Andrus, who has no CFL experience.

Track meet looking to lure Bolt to T.O.

Negotiations are underway to have Olympic superstar Usain Bolt run in Toronto this summer.

Organizers of a proposed international track and field meet in Toronto for June 10 are negotiating with Bolt's agent to have the Jamaican phenom headline the event. It's believed that Bolt, who rocked Beijing with three world record-breaking performances, would command an appearance fee of some $250,000 to run at the University of Toronto's Varsity Centre.



Usain Bolt

A spokesperson for the University of Toronto confirmed discussions have taken place, but declined further comment.

The driving force behind the event is John Carson, an energetic track enthusiast who runs the "Classic Mile" in Cambridge, Ont., where for the past five summers a new Mercedes Benz has been available to any runner who can break the four-minute barrier.

It's believed meet organizers will try to attract such top Canadian athletes as Olympic bronze medalist hurdler Priscilla Lopes-Schliep of Whitby, shot putter Dylan Armstrong and 800-metre runner Gary Reed, both fourth-place finishers in Beijing, and former world champion hurdler Perdita Felicien, who missed the Games due to injury.

The former Varsity Stadium underwent an overhaul in recent years and has a 5,000-seat capacity — which could likely be expanded with makeshift stands. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

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Metro Drive

Honda Civic still No. 1

Based on its all-time record annual sales of 72,463 units in 2008, Honda Civic became the first passenger car in 15 years to achieve status as the top-selling vehicle, including all cars and trucks, in Canada. The Civic also remained Canada's top-selling passenger car for an 11th consecutive year, outselling its nearest competitor by 14,727 units.

EDITOR: KUMAR SAHA, KUMAR.SAHA@METRONEWS.CA

Where the cool cars go

No shortage of wow factors at this year's Detroit auto show

GETTY IMAGES PHOTOS

Fisker Automotive showed off the Karma S plug-in hybrid at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit.

Despite the doom and gloom surrounding the auto industry, several cool and cutting-edge cars were launched at the ongoing North American International Auto Show in Detroit. Here are some of them in words and images.

CHRYSLER 200C EV CONCEPT

Chrysler offered a glimpse of what an electric-powered sedan would look like with a new concept carcalled the 200C EV Concept. The four-door, rear-wheel drive sedan also could be made as a hybrid or with a six-cylinder engine.

The Dodge Circuit EV concept was unveiled in Detroit.

The car's interior is free of switches or levers, with functions managed via a panoramic touch screen and other interactive components.

Chrysler says it's also adding the Jeep Patriot small SUV to its stable of proposed electric vehicles.

The company also has its electric prototype Dodge sports car, four-door Jeep Wrangler and Chrysler minivan on display.

HONDA INSIGHT HYBRID 2010

Honda unveiled its next-generation hybrid, the Insight, and said the car will arrive in U.S. showrooms this April. Honda's much-anticipated car is expected to compete head-on with Toyota's Prius, which remains the top-selling hybrid in the U.S. Honda said the 2010 Insight will have a lower price than the Civic Hybrid, which has a base price of $23,650 US.

The Insight, a five-door sedan, is modelled after Honda's FCX Clarity fuel-cell car, the Japanese automaker said. Honda said the Insight will feature an onboard system, dubbed Eco Assist, designed to help drivers improve their fuel economy during trips.

Honda estimates the Insight's driving range at more than 650 kilometres.

LEXUS HS250H 2010

Lexus unveiled a new hybrid, saying it will be the most fuel-efficient vehicle in the luxury brand's lineup.

The new General Motors BEAT Concept vehicle makes its way to the GM exhibit stage at the Cobo Center in Detroit Sunday.

The 2010 HS250h sedan, Lexus' fourth hybrid, will be the first standalone gas-electric vehicle for Toyota's luxury nameplate.

Lexus said the car will arrive at North American dealerships this summer. No EPA fuel economy rating has been assigned yet, but the carmaker said its city fuel economy rating will be better than that of the Smart fortwo two-seater.

2009 MINI COOPER

A 2009 Mini Cooper convertible drove out of a giant cube of fake ice blocks at Cobo Center to make its global debut.

The latest version includes a powered soft-top roof that allows the driver to open and close it while going up to 30 km/h.

The convertible also features an "Openometre" that records the time drivers spend travelling with the roof down.

KIA SOUL'STER

Kia Motors made a pitch for the young and hip car shopper, introducing a funky open-air concept based on its upcoming Kia Soul.

Kia showed the Kia Soul'ster, an open-air utility vehicle designed to appeal to the youth market with seating for four.

The concept has a two-piece canvas top and fold-flat passenger and rear seats to provide additional storage space.

Following the Soul'ster unveiling, 20-somethings clad in white tossed beach balls into the crowd and the automaker served a beach-themed spread of Corona beer and Mexican food. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GM introduced the Cadillac Converj electric luxury coupe concept at the Detroit auto show.

Doing a brand new dance at Cobo Center

AutoPilot

Michael Goetz
Veteran auto journalist

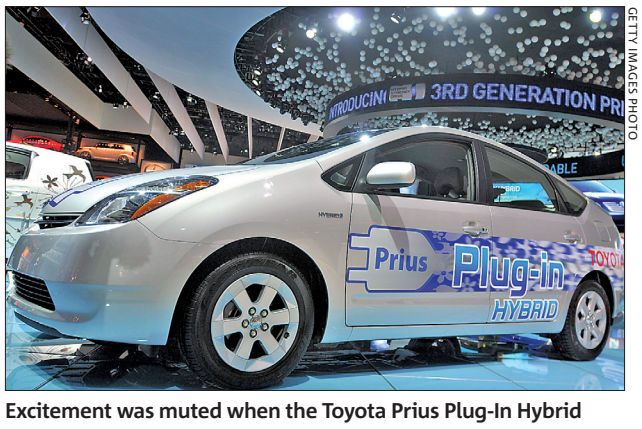
The Detroit auto show, also known by its more grandiose name — The North American International Auto Show — is in full swing. But it's an awkward swing, like a 12-year-old boy with size 10 feet dancing with his mother.

Big auto shows usually have great atmosphere. Hard not to, I guess, when you've got world debuts of exciting vehicular creations and very theatrical press conferences and displays.

The whole point of these auto shows, it seems, is a chance for the auto players to one-up each other, show a little swagger, and give us that sizzle we so much like with our car steaks.

Put someone on a stage to be humble, however, and, well, it's not great theatre. Unless, of course, you were looking for tragedy or a train wreck. But we didn't get that either. The 2009 Detroit auto show was not nearly as exciting as past years, or as entertainingly bad as some had hoped.

Even when someone had something cool to show the world, like VW did with its brilliant, minimalist, mid-engine roadster concept, it was done in the wake of a sombre speech by its chairman, outlining the company's commitment to "the show, the city, and the U.S. auto industry."



GETTY IMAGES PHOTO

Excitement was muted when the Toyota Prius Plug-In Hybrid vehicle was introduced at the Cobo Center in Detroit, columnist Michael Goetz writes.

As you know, many of his import colleagues didn't show up. Many others decided to go low key, with simple displays and no "unveil."

Ford is the sole Detroit-based automaker that isn't dipping into government bailout money — for now at least. It seemed to revel in that position, with decidedly more whiz-bang in its unveilings, and more strut to its stride than exhibited by either of its U.S. brethren.

One of its introductions, the 2010 Ford Mustang Shelby GT 500, also gave us gearheads one of the few occasions to holler — not only is it a great 540-hp boy toy, it exited the stage in the Cobo Center via tire squeal. Some in the crowd actually squealed back, in delight no doubt, for putting a small dent in the political correctness warp shield that seemed to be in force around the whole show.

Nobody whooped or hollered when Ford talked about its new Fusion hybrid, or later, when Toyota announced that its new Prius would return a combined fuel efficiency rating of 50 mpg, or when Chinese automaker BYD took the wraps off the world's first production plug-in hybrid (on sale in China later this month).

But that's OK. This was not a show to stir the emotions; this was people trying to figure out a new dance.

Michael Goetz has been writing about cars and editing automotive publications for more than 20 years. He lives in Toronto with his family and a neglected 1967 Jaguar E-type.

The award-winning Hyundai Genesis marks a major step for the South Korean automaker in its push to produce a more upscale, mass-market vehicle for North American consumers.

Genesis a top creation

A look at 2009 North American Car of the Year

I think people have the wrong idea of luxury. Luxury isn't heated seats, a sunroof or leather. It can't be defined by options lists, vehicle types nor engineering feats — nor with pedigree, prestige or presence.

Worse still, luxury becomes meaningless immediately when many people have access to it. Espresso in the morning used to be a luxury. Sushi used to be a luxury. So did cottages, condos, bottled water, cellphones and designer handbags. Once you can buy it at the local mall, it's ubiquitous.

Hyundai knows ubiquitous. From the Pony to the $9,995 Accent, for decades its electricity bills have been paid on the back of frugal and simple vehicles.

There's nothing groundbreaking about the Genesis' styling. Apart from the conspicuous absence of a Hyundai badge, of course. From some angles it looks like a Mercedes-Benz S-Class; other viewpoints bring out a little BMW 5-Series, Lexus GS, or Infiniti M. All of which are easily recognized as luxury vehicles, and admittedly the Genesis also looks like it could be parked out front at the Four Seasons.

2009 Hyundai Genesis

Type: Luxury sedan
Price: $37,995–$43,995
Engine: V6, DOHC 3.8L/ V8, DOHC, 4.6L
HP: 290@6,000/375@6,550

Highlights

- Named 2009 North American Car of the Year at the Detroit auto show
- Value for money
- Impressive drivetrain

The car's trump card is its drivetrain: Either a 3.8L V6 with 306 horsepower or a 4.6L V8 with 375 horses. All that power is channelled through — yes — the rear wheels. The V8 even has a limited-slip differential.

So-called the "Tao" V8, a Genesis so equipped can do 0-100 km/h in well under six seconds, and onto a 14.1-second quarter-mile time.

Credit goes to a near-perfect weight distribution and adaptive shock absorbers manufactured by Sachs — which are standard on all models. The chassis seems reluctant at first to liven up, being geared more toward ride comfort than Nürburgring Nordschleife lap times. But because the suspension needs to sense the driver wants to attack a series of corners, you need a certain absence of imagination to what will happen if the 1,817 kg car doesn't decide to stick.

Price ranges from $37,995 to $48,995, with the V8 starting at $43,995. Standard on the V6 and V8 base models are: Six-speed automatic transmission, ABS with EBD, eight airbags, front active headrests, electronic stability control, air conditioning, leather seats, heated seats, power locks, power windows, dual zone climate control, auto defogging system, proximity entry with smart key system, AM/FM/XM/MP3 stereo with six-disc CD player and seven speakers, iPod and USB/AUX-input, heated exterior mirrors and front fog lights.

Which, if we're honest, is more than anyone could ever want — until you get to the $2,000 premium package, which adds things like a sunroof, larger rims, HID headlights, and front and rear parking sensors.

But wait, there's more. The $5,000 technology package installs woodgrain trim, power rear sunshade, Lexicon 17-speaker audio system, cooled driver's seat, navigation system, back-up camera and adaptive headlights.

CARGUIDE STAFF

carguidemagazine.com
For the latest road tests, vehicle evaluations and more, visit: carguidemagazine.com
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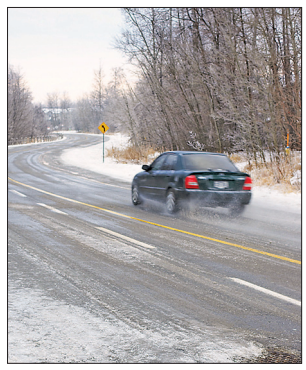
Winter driving myths busted

Visions of navigating through snow, sleet and black ice are enough to convince most drivers to hibernate this winter. But for those willing to brave the icy roads, Tracey Poulin, health and safety manager for FedEx, offers drivers some safe driving tips and puts an end to a number of dangerous winter driving myths.



There are many winter driving myths out there, including the misconception that during winter, most accidents occur during storms.

MYTH NO. 1

There is no difference between all-season tires and winter tires

FALSE — There are many different types of tires available for all kinds of climates and conditions. When preparing for a change of season, consult the experts and have them recommend the most appropriate tires for your vehicle.

MYTH NO. 2

In winter, accidents usually happen during storms.

FALSE — During a storm, drivers tend to drive a lot more carefully, but when the weather is good, people take more risks.

MYTH NO. 3

Thanks to my anti-lock brakes, I can brake without danger, which isn't the case with traditional brakes.

FALSE — The nature of anti-lock brakes means that stopping distances may be longer than with traditional brakes.

MYTH NO. 4

Nothing beats a nice wide tire for driving in snow.

FALSE — Wide tires tend to float on top of the snow, unlike narrow tires, which provide a better grip.

MYTH NO. 5

In winter you should keep your distance and leave at least five car lengths between yourself and the car in front when driving at 100 km/h.

FALSE — Transport Canada recommends leaving a distance of 10 car lengths when driving at 100 km/h in winter.

NEWS CANADA

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See contest rules and details are online at metronews.ca

Telemark weekend
On the weekend of Jan. 24 and 25, telemark specialists and enthusiasts will gather at Le Massif in Charlevoix, Que., for the 13th annual event dedicated to the slide sport. There will be activities for everyone from beginners to experts; visit lemassif.com METRO NEWS SERVICES

Travel

Underwater photo contest

From March 9 to 14, Photo Sub 2009, an international underwater photography competition, will take place at the International Scuba Diving Centre in Isle of Youth, Cuba. The sub-aquatic contest will grant 17 awards in categories such as fish (turtle, octopus, squid), undersea flora and fauna, colours, works using flash, and so on. For more information, visit cayolargodelsur.cu/fotosub2009, cubatur.cu and cubatravel.cu. METRO NEWS SERVICES

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The downside of travel advisories

Warnings are necessary, but can they make you worry more than you need to?

TheTravelJunkie
Julia Dimon
metronews.ca/traveljunkie

Travel advisories aren't the most comforting reports to read right before you get on a plane. One such advisory, containing phrases such as "fatal bombings," "incidents of violence targeting crowds of civilians" and "random acts of terrorism," inspired second thoughts about my impending visit to war-torn Sri Lanka.

In this South Asian country, the 20-year-long conflict between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and the Sri Lanka Army has lead to over 60,000 deaths, damaged the economy, brought political instability and, unsurprisingly, caused a decline in tourist numbers. In 2007, close to 500,000 tourists visited Sri Lanka, 11.7 per cent fewer less than the previous year.

It's no wonder. A few days before I arrived, Tamil Tiger rebels fired at a civilian bus travelling along a freeway.

According to local newspapers, the random attack killed three passengers and injured 16.

With news like that, even I — the girl who has backpacked through parts of the DR Congo, Rwanda and the Palestinian Territories — was feeling spooked.

After a week of exploring, touring from the capital city to the countryside, I discovered a reality beyond the travel advisories — a warm and wonderful country with stunning landscapes, rich cultural festivals and friendly people.

I learned how Ceylon tea is processed, how sapphires are harvested and how to say hello in both Sinhala and Tamil. I checked out a community development project, played cricket with school children and planted my very own mango tree.

Sri Lanka quickly become one of my all-time favourite destinations. Sights, sounds, smell and colour abound; in fact, everyone and everything in this country seems like a potentential subject for a National Geographic photograph.

As much as I wish more people could see this beautiful country, there's something selfishly intoxicating about visiting "uncharted territories" off the tourist grid.

I loved being one of the only tourists around, but for the Sri Lankan people, it's another matter.

"If the tourists aren't hiring tour guides, I can't make money to support my family," said HP, a 65 year-old who takes tourists around the Independence Memorial Hall in Colombo. A man with white hair and sparkling blue eyes, he explained that prices have gone up in recent years and living is hard.

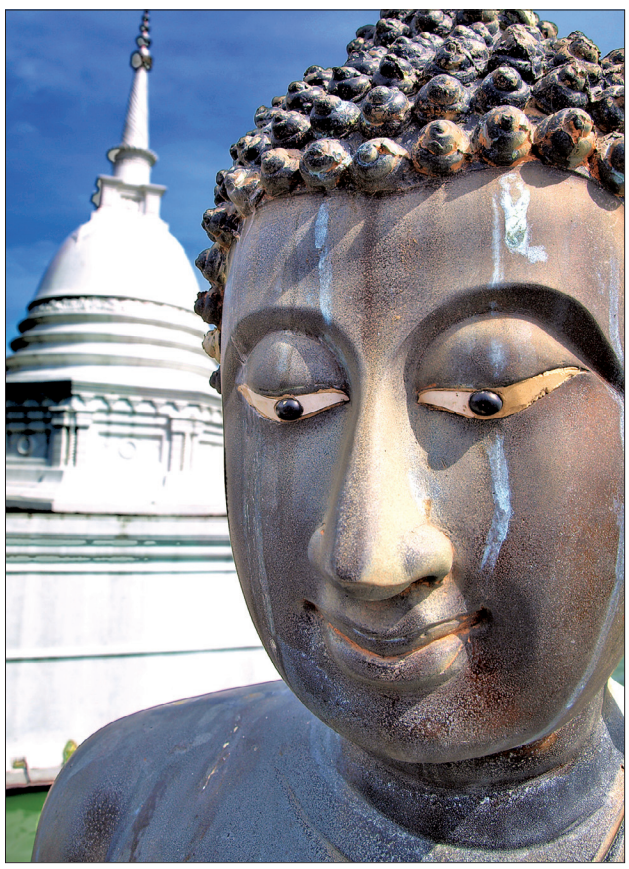
Like many others I spoke to — from jewelery store owners to vendors hawking elephant-themed trinkets — HP said that if the downturn continues, he may have to leave the country altogether to look for alternative employment.

Dee, a native of Ohio, first came to Sri Lanka as part of a tsunami relief project but, quickly, he was compelled to do more than just volunteer. Together with local partners he set up Jack's Place, a guesthouse catering to foreign backpackers. When it first opened three years ago, business was booming but in recent months, Dee's business has hit a dry patch. Still, there was an overriding sense of hope among the people with whom I spoke — hope that the civil war will end, that there will finally be peace and the tourists will come flooding back.

Julia Dimon is co-host of Word Travels, airing Sundays at 8 p.m. EST on OLN; juliadimon.com.

Word Travels

- Catch the second season of Word Travels, a documentary series that follows the real-life adventures of travel writers Julia Dimon and Robin Esrock. It airs Sundays at 8 p.m. EST on OLN.



JULIA DIMON/FOR METRO CANADA

Left, a man sells flowers outside a temple that's popular with tourists — he's one of many who are affected by the drop in Sri Lanka's visitor numbers. Right, the Gangarama Temple overlooking Beira Lake was another tourist favourite.

Sri Lanka

- Sri Lanka can seem scary when you read the travel advisories. Government documents ask tourists to avoid several areas in the northeastern parts of the country, including Kilinochchi, Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Ampara Districts, the Jaffna Peninsula, Mannar and Vavuniya.
- In the region I visited — Kataragama, in the south — I felt completely safe, although I did have one brief moment of uncertainty while walking through an overcrowded market at a religious festival. Instead of worrying, I temporarily adopted a fatalistic approach and bought myself some curry. JULIA DIMON/FOR METRO CANADA

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Inauguration Day in Washington, D.C.
Over two million people will converge on Washington, D.C. for the Jan. 20 presidential inauguration. CulturalTourismDC.org has details on events from the debut of a wax figure of Barack Obama at Madame Tussauds in Washington to balls, museum exhibits, concerts and more. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Navigating Obama's Chicago

The U.S. president-elect's hometown haunts are worth checking out

EMMA E. FORREST
Metro World News

Barack Obama sightings won't be quite so frequent in the president-elect's hometown of Chicago once he moves the wife and kids into the White House. But that doesn't mean you can't check out the Windy City in purely presidential style.

A view of the Chicago skyline. Visitors to the city can see where the Obama family lived, shopped, ate and socialized.

United States
Presidential
Inauguration

Where to stay

Budget

Hyde Park Arms Hotel: If you want to crash in Obama's South Side 'hood — the lovely Kenmore-Hyde Park — the Hyde Park Arms is the way to do it on the cheap. It's a clean, safe hotel, providing just the basics. Rooms are leased weekly, bi-weekly or monthly. From $145 US/week; 5316 S. Harper Ave., 773-493-3500.

Mid-range

Hilton Chicago: The landmark downtown hotel is where Obama held his first press conference as the president-elect. The comfortable, classic hotel overlooks Grant Park, where he gave his election night victory speech. From $98/night; 720 S. Michigan Ave., 312-922-4400, hilton.com.

Deluxe

The Whitehall Hotel: The historic, surprisingly-large boutique hotel downtown is gorgeously appointed, restored meticulously to its original 1920s grandeur. It's also a favourite of Obama-supporting celebrities. From $147/night; 105 E. Delaware Pl., 866-753-4081, thewhitehallhotel.com.

What to see:

Kenwood-Hyde Park neighbourhood: Dominated by the beautiful campus of the University of Chicago (where Obama taught constitutional law), the president-elect's neighbourhood, Kenwood-Hyde Park, offers a fascinating collection of large homes from the late 19th century; the family resides in a large, red-brick home on Greenwood Avenue.

Learn about that Frank Lloyd Wright-designed building you're gawking at by taking a walking tour of the area, guided by members of the Chicago Architecture Foundation ($10, architecture.org). Afterwards, check out the Hyde Park Art Center, the oldest alternative exhibition space in the city; 5020 S. Cornell Ave., 773-324-5520, hydeparkart.org.

Lake Michigan shoreline: The Obamas are an active family, and one of their favourite Chicago pastimes is to take in the skyline views and water breezes from one the city's more than 552 parks, including the South Side's Promontory Point in Burnham Park (5491 South Shore Dr., chicagoparkdistrict.com).

Downtown's Grant Park, often referred to as the city's "front yard," (Randolph Street and Michigan Avenue, chicagoparkdistrict.com) is where Obama's jubilant election night party took place; it includes Millennium Park, featuring numerous public art areas, and the always perfect photo op of Buckingham Fountain.

Sears Tower: Take in the whole of Obama's hometown from atop the 1,450-foot Sears Tower, the tallest building in North America. On a clear day, visitors on the viewing deck can see for 40 to 50 miles over neighbouring states Michigan, Indiana and Wisconsin, or just marvel at Chicago's stunning architecture; 233 S. Wacker Dr., $12.95, 312-875-9696, theskydeck.com.

U.S. Cellular Field: It's almost essential that the American president is a fan of the great American pastime — baseball. Obama roots for the White Sox, who call the South Side's U.S. Cellular Field home; 333 W. 35th St., Tel 312-674-1000, chicago.whitesox.mlb.com.

Where to shop

57th Street Books: This is where the president-elect liked to get literary. Now, of course, you can pick up an Obama-penned tome at this cosy, independent South Side bookseller; 1301 E. 57th St., 773-684-1300, semcoop.booksense.com.

J. Crew and The Magnificent Mile: Classic American casual wear is J. Crew's forte — and a Michelle Obama favourite. The soon-to-be first lady famously wore a sleek yellow J. Crew ensemble on The Tonight Show with Jay Leno in October.

The clothier's outpost is on downtown's Michigan Avenue, otherwise known as The Magnificent Mile, where shopping — from fashion to antiques to Chicago souvenirs — is serious business. J. Crew, 900 N. Michigan Ave., 312-751-2739, jcrew.com; themagnificentmile.com.

Urbanest/Anderonville: Chicago is known for its fabulous design sense, and the eco-conscious Urbanest offers the best well-priced modern home furnishings in town. Any piece in their Soho Collection would look stunning in the White House, but if you're looking to furnish your house (and not spend thousands in shipping costs to get a piece back home), their accessories, including lamps and vases, are equally divine; 5228 N. Clark St., 773-271-1000, urbanestliving.com.

After a stop at Urbanest, Andersonville is a North Side neighbourhood worth lingering in; it's a charming, diverse destination full of independent businesses offering boutique shopping, dining or a pint.

Where to eat:

Budget

MacArthur's: In his book The Audacity of Hope, Obama reminisces about the turkey legs and dressing at MacArthur's, a soul food (they prefer to call it "fine Southern cuisine") icon in the city; 5412 W. Madison St.,773-261-2316, macarthursrestaurant.com

Italian Fiesta Pizzeria: Obama loves the thin-crust pizza so much at this Hyde Park restaurant, the owners will be flown to Washington, D.C., to cook up their pies for his Jan. 20 inauguration;1400 E. 47th St., 773-924-5339.

Expensive:

Topolobampo: Celebrity chef Rick Bayless serves up Sopa Azteca and other Mexican specialties to the soon-to-be first family at this 70-seat, downtown foodie hotspot; 445 N. Clark St., 312-661-1434, rickbayless.com, reservations recommended two weeks in advance.

Spiaggia: The site of Barack and Michelle Obama's so-called first date after winning the White House, Spiaggia is a world-class Italian establishment with views almost as impeccable as the service and cuisine; 980 N. Michigan Ave., 312-280-2750, spiaggiarestaurant.com.

Where to go out at night

Green Mill Cocktail Lounge: Chi-Town's unofficial, Prohibition-era politicians — gangsters — used this jazz club as their headquarters. The scene feels straight out of a James Cagney film; musically, it's still a spot to find the best jazz in the city; 4802 N. Broadway St., 773-878-5552, greenmilljazz.com.

Signature Lounge: This lounge is on the 95th floor of the Hancock Building with breathtaking views of Chicago; 875 N. Michigan Ave., 312-787-9596, thesignatureroom.com.

Chicago

- Chicago is divided into four main sections: Downtown (which contains the business district called the Loop), the North Side, the South Side (where Barack Obama lives), and the West Side.
- O'Hare International Airport is 13 miles from downtown Chicago. A taxi costs approximately $30 to 50 US.
- Midway Airport is 10 miles from downtown Chicago. A taxi costs about $30.
- Visit choosechicago.com.

METRO WORLD NEWS

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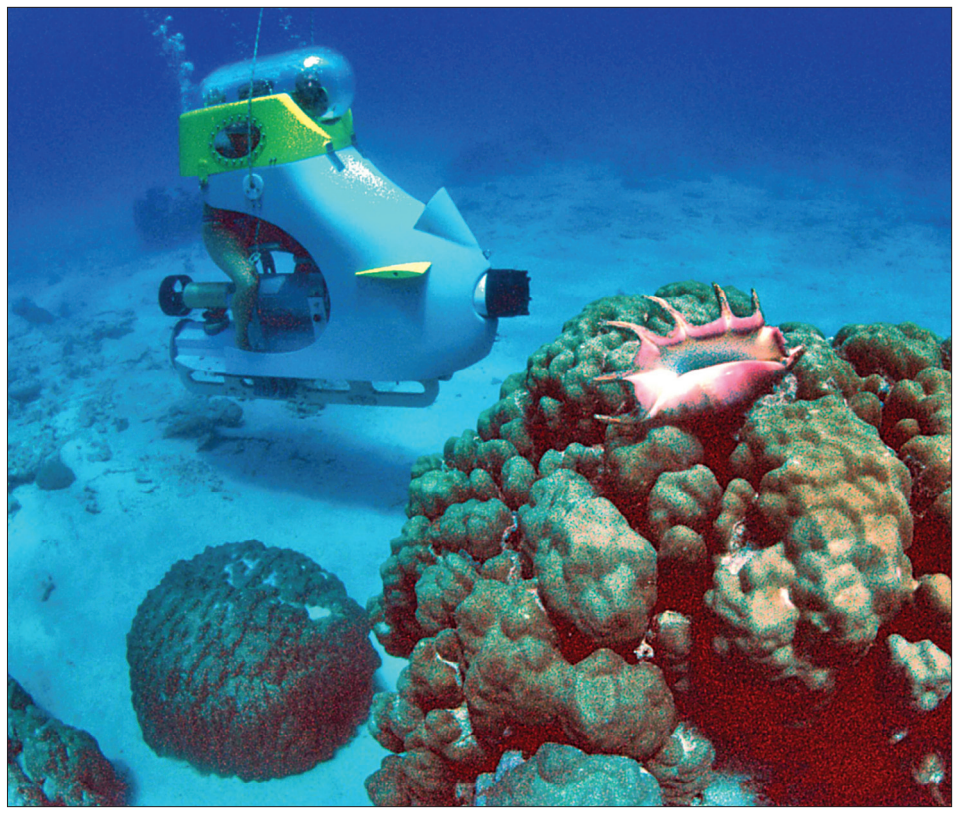
By the numbers

A North America-wide survey released by Travelocity found that people are reluctant to cut back on their vacations, despite the economy — 28 per cent of respondents said their vacations will be the final thing on which they will cut back. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Underwater in Mauritius

Explore and enjoy the blue waters around this island nation



An underwater "sub-scooter" safari is one way to explore the azure blue, bath-water warm waters around the exquisite volcanic island of Mauritius.

EMMA E. FORREST
Metro World News

It's not every day that you find yourself piloting a scooter through the corals of the south western Indian Ocean. However, this is exactly how I made my first exploration of the azure blue waters of Mauritius — on what claims to be the world's only underwater "sub-scooter" safari.

While scooter and rider are submerged three metres under the surface, a transparent dome over your head is pumped with air for so you can breathe normally and chat with your co-driver as you navigate through shoals of brightly-coloured fish. (blue-safari.com, based in the resort of Grand Baie, $183 per couple).

Of course, this is just one way of enjoying the bath water-warm ocean around this exquisite volcanic island. Mauritius is famous for long stretches of soft white sandy beaches, as well as the ring of coral reef around it that creates protected lagoons full of exotic fish.

Should you get bored of sunbathing, you can wade into the water with a snorkel. You can usually see plenty of underwater activity within a few metres of the shore, and most hotels offer snorkelling trips where they'll take you to the most fish-crowded areas of the reef. If you're keen to see more, diving is spectacular here

If you prefer to be on top of the water, there's surfing, kayaking, pedalo, sailing and even kite surfing, popular with a hip crowd on the western coast.

Another must is deep-sea fishing. Mauritius is one of the best places in the world to fish for marlin, a large and imposing dark blue fish with a pointed nose. Take a trip with JP Henry Charters, a family-run operation based at the Le Morne Angler's Club on the western coast, and they'll send you out with local skippers who will take you to the best fishing spots, sailing past groups of curious dolphins. They'll ensure that even amateurs hook a share of silver bonito and perhaps a bright yellow dorado, before you are strapped into the chair to put up a fight with a big one. Henry encourages a release policy. (blackriver-mauritius.com, from $565 for six people).

With most watersports available at your hotel, its no wonder many visitors to Mauritius never leave the grounds. In fact, with luxurious beachfront hotels, with gourmet restaurants, spas and limitless activities, along with fabulous weather and hospitality, it's no wonder people come here for their honeymoons and never see the rest of the country.

However, that would be a shame, there is so much more to Mauritius than sea, beach and waving palm trees.

This tiny 2,040-square-kilometre country wasn't 'found' until the 16th century, when it saw a succession of Dutch, then French and British colonisers, bringing with them first slaves from Africa, then Indian and Chinese labourers. The country became independent in 1968 and remains a stable, prosperous and highly literate nation, with a lively and harmonious mix of cultures and religions.

Read more on page 17 »

If you go ...

Where to stay
- Tamassa, the four star hotel with friendly staff and uplifting, chic rooms, and all the facilities you might need — pretty beach, spa, watersports, swimming pools, several restaurants, nightclub, bar with live shows (naiade.com).

How to get there
- Air Mauritius planes with their uplifting orange and lime green colour scheme, fly from most destinations into Mauritius main airport at Plaisance (airmauritius.com).

Getting around
- hire a car or have a friendly experienced guide from Mauritours show you around (mauritours.net).

Curreny
- $1 = 26 Mauritius Rupees

Language
- English and French

METRO WORLD NEWS

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Chicago Getaway $499 — Chicago Hilton & Towers + taxes & fees $121
INCLUDES roundtrip airfare and 3 nights 3-star accom centrally located. Departs Feb 9/inf/nw. ADD Chicago city hop-on hop-off tour from $34.
California Fly & Drive $499 + taxes & fees $249
INCLUDES airfare to San Francisco, return from Los Angeles and 7-d ay car rental with unlimited mileage to discover the Golden Coast. Departs Feb 11/inf/ac. ADD San Francisco helicopter tour from $179.

All-inclusive Holidays
Puerto Plata 4-Star $497 — Breezes + taxes & fees $308
INCLUDES roundtrip airfare, transfers and 7 nights 4-star accom. eparts Jan 20/nol/ts.
ADD Santo Domingo city tour from $73.
Cancun 4-Star $597 — Oasis Cancun + taxes & fees $267
INCLUDES roundtrip airfare, transfers and 7 nights 4-star accom. Departs Jan 21/nol/ts.
Margarita Island 4-Star $627 — Dunes & Beach Resort + taxes & fees $183
INCLUDES roundtrip airfare, transfers and 7 nights 4-star accom. Departs Mar 3/nol/ts.
Costa Rica 4-Star $697 — Barcelo Tambor Beach + taxes & fees $190
INCLUDES roundtrip airfare, transfers and 7 nights 4-star accom. Departs Jan 20/nol/ts.

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Road tripping

The Travelocity poll also found 51 per cent of will people consider using more cost-effective transportation, such as driving, in 2009; however Canadians are less likely to reduce their flying than Americans. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Grab a cold drink at the Beau Rivage hotel's Beach Bar, left, or relax at the Spa at Legends Hotel on the island of Mauritius.

Continued from page 16 ››

Away from the northern coast, where most of the hotels are based, there is plenty to discover. Take a day trip and you can fit in some of the major sites and get a flavour for Mauritius' past and the present.

Head towards the capital of Port Louis, and you'll find Pamplemousse — stop off and visit the botanical gardens here, with its collection of fabulous exotic plants including giant waterlilies given as a gift by Britain's Queen Victoria.

Port Louis is a bustling harbour town, where you can visit the buzzing markets and browse for cheap clothing — until recently Mauritius was a major player in clothing manufacturing.

Heading south, you'll come across Curepipe, the upmarket town where Mauritius' high society resides. Here you'll also find the Trou aux Cerfs, an extinct volcano, now lush with trees and birdlife, tucked away in the heart of a neighbourhood of 1960s and 1970s bungalows. Continue south and you'll enter the backbone of verdant countryside, with its valleys, waterfalls including the Alexandra Falls and the Black River Gorge, and fields of sugar cane, Victoria pineapple and tea. Highlights here include the Hindu temple at Grand Bassin, with its sacred lake, and 33-metre high statue called the Mangal Mahadev guarded by families of monkeys (Gangatalao.org).

Further along your route you'll drive through the Plaine Champagne, named after the tiny white flowers that pepper the route. Stop off to see the seven coloured earths of Chamarel, a landscape of blue, green, orange, purple and yellow.

The south is largely unspoiled by tourism, and well worth exploring. Start out at the dramatic Le Morne mountain in the southwest, which was used as a shelter by slaves in the 18th century and was recently named a UNESCO World Heritage site.

The most exclusive hotels might be on the eastern coast, but our favourite is Tamassa in the south. This spacious new four-star design hotel has an upbeat atmosphere and its bright, chic minimalist décor makes a refreshing change from the formal, colonial feel of many of the other hotels in Mauritius. With swimming pools, spa, kids club and watersports on tap it's a popular choice with both honeymooners and families.

On the web

- mauritius.net

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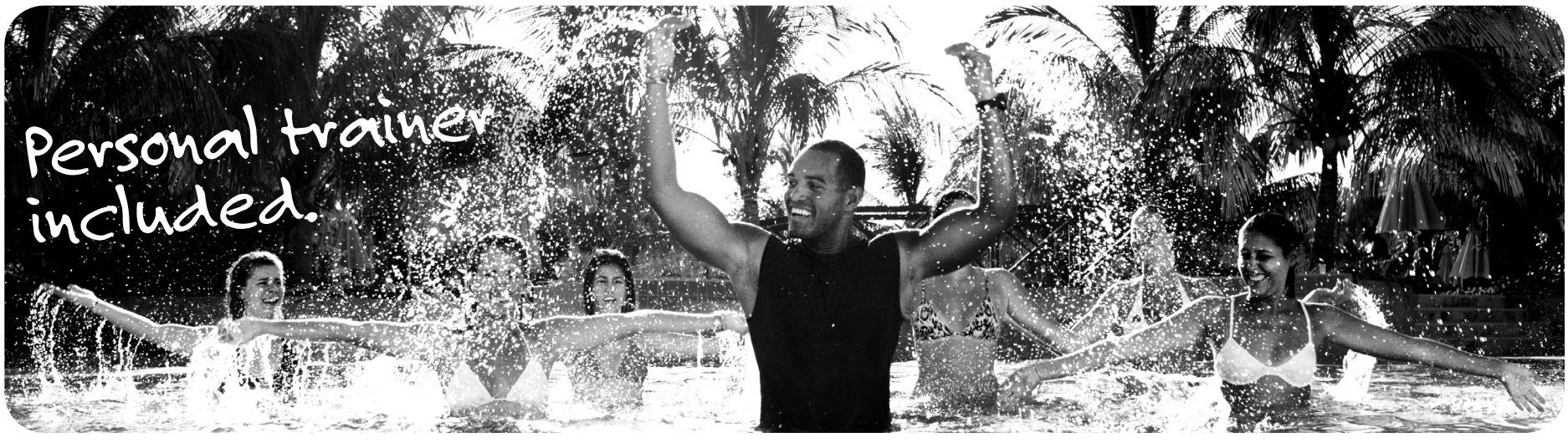

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Philadelphia to host world-class shows in '09

Philadelphia will host several museum shows this year, including world-exclusive exhibits of Paul Cezanne, Galileo and Medici at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and showcases of children's artists Maurice Sendak, Jim Henson and more. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mardi Gras continues to rebuild in Katrina's wake

Roll out the king cakes, plastic beads and Mardi Gras masks. Carnival season has begun in New Orleans. Jan. 6, the 12th night on the biblical calendar, marked the beginning of the 153rd annual pre-Lenten celebration

Before it wraps up Feb. 24, almost 100 parades will have rolled in the area and thousands of riders will have thrown tonnes of glitzy gee-gaws to what organizers hope will be huge crowds.

"The celebration is pretty local for a couple of weeks," said Mardi Gras historian Errol Laborde. "But the parades kick in just before the end of the month, and then it's pretty much nonstop."

Mayor Ray Nagin acknowledged the start of the season with the city's annual king cake party, slicing up dozens of pastries covered with purple, green and gold icing, and each holding a tiny, plastic baby.

Tradition has it that the person who finds the baby in their slice must supply the next king cake.

King cakes, believed to have originated in France around the 12th century, are eaten throughout Carnival season, but on 12th night, or the Feast of the Epiphany, they mark the arrival of the three wise men bearing gifts 12 days after Christmas.

In New Orleans, with its tourism-oriented economy, the celebration represents both fun and business.

Unlike last year, when the NBA All-Star game and the Bowl Championship Series title game were added to the city's usual lineup of the Bayou Classic, New Orleans Bowl, and Sugar Bowl, this year Mardi Gras will stand as the solitary big money draw between the Sugar Bowl and Jazz Fest.

Mardi Gras generates more than $1 billion US in spending each year, said Mavis Early, executive director of the Greater New Orleans Visitors and Convention Bureau.

Mardi Gras had showed steady growth in attendance and spending since 1990 before dropping after hurrican Katrina in 2005, but the event has been rebuilding since then.

Billed as the Greatest Free Show on Earth, there is no charge to those attending the parades, but for those riding on the floats, the cost can be high. The riders shoulder the cost of all "throws" — the strings of beads, toys and trinkets showered on crowds along the parade route.

At Randazzo's Camellia City Bakery, one of more than a dozen bakeries that ship king cakes nationally and internationally, orders for king cakes began coming in before Christmas, said saleswoman Cindi Picou, and will continue through Fat Tuesday.

"We'll send out more than 2,000 cakes in the next few weeks," Picou said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BILL HABER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jennifer Jones leads the Treme Brass Band into a news conference in New Orleans, last week. City officials and local carnival organizations came together to celebrate the start of the Mardi Gras season. Joining Jones is one of the famous Mardi Gras Indians.

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Beermaker's theme parks run dry
Anheuser-Busch says it will stop giving free beer samples to SeaWorld and Busch Gardens visitors. They plan to develop more family-friendly venues — but will still sell suds. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Free trip, thanks to blizzard

It seems that Annalisa Turner's frugality is paying dividends. Turner is one of hundreds of Atlantic Canadians who won vacation packages they had earlier booked online through an itravel2000 promotion.

"It was $4 cheaper for me to book through the online company than to book directly through the vendors so that's what I did," said Turner, who will be heading to Cuba with her mother and two young children for two weeks in April.

The online travel company promised to cover the entire cost of holidays in the sun if more than 12.7 centimetres of snow fell in Halifax on New Year's Day.

Customers who booked their trips between June 17 and Nov. 2 of last year qualified for the promotion. Then all they had to do was wait for Mother Nature to do her thing.

The blizzard that hit Halifax on New Year's Day left an official snowfall of 13.6 centimetres at Robert L. Stanfield International Airport in Halifax.

Turner says the trip is a nice distraction because her husband, an army engineer, will be leaving for a second tour of Afghanistan at about the same time she's packing the sun blocker.

"We've got hundreds of people taking trips at a cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars."
Stuart Morris

"It will be nice for me and the kids with the help of my mother to break up this tour," said Turner, who lives in Moncton, N.B.

And although she's sure her husband would much rather be spending time on a Caribbean beach with his family she says it's not an entire loss for him.

"Our tacit agreement is that when he goes (to Afghanistan) he's not allowed to comment on how much I spend," she says, laughing.

"This trip is free and he's very excited about the money coming back."

Stuart Morris, vice-president of marketing for itravel2000, says there are hundreds of winners in the region.

"It's a big win. We've got hundreds of people taking trips at a cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars," he said.

Some refunds have already been sent and others will follow.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Hidden secrets and freebies top budget-travel spots

BUDGET TRAVEL Undiscovered places, important events and tumbling foreign currencies helped define Budget Travel Magazine's list of the top 10 budget destinations for 2009.

Austin, Texas, made the list as a venue for affordable and free cultural events like the annual South By Southwest festival. Washington was included because of the presidential inauguration, but also because so many of the museums and monuments are free to visit. The magazine also lauded Hawaii because a drop in visitors last year has led to discounts this year.

Abroad, Budget Travel recommends Mexico, Hungary and Iceland as places where the U.S. dollar goes farther than it used to.

Destinations getting ready for big events include Berlin, which marks the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall this year, and Vancouver, which will host the Winter Olympics in 2010.

Finally, the magazine's list includes Cambodia for its affordable guesthouses and must-see temples, and Panama, for its eco-tourism and wildlife.

See the list at budgettravel.com. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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tico.ca

Trade huskies and a sled for a horse and skis in the latest snow-sport trend — ski-jeering.

Horsing around in the snow

Swap your huskies and sled for a horse and a pair of skis for the hippest new snow sport of the season in South Tyrol and Italian Dolomites.

Ski-jeering was originally used as a form of transport by the Lapps who harnessed reindeers. Your skis will be powered by a horse as you zig-zag your way across the slopes with the stunning mountain scenery as a backdrop. Just don't forget to hold on tight to the rudder bar and to steer the horse — like waterskiing, this activity is not without effort.

The riding is suited to any kind of level, from complete beginners to expert snow gliders and costs about $80 an hour.

The experience is organized by horseback-riding travel specialist, The Riding Company, and based at the four-star Post Hotel next to the excellent resort of Kronplatz in Bruneck, Italy. So you can follow up your ski-jeering with a session on the slopes, before you hit the indoor pool, spa or sauna to give your muscles some much deserved soothing time.

METRO WORLD NEWS

On the web

- theridingcompany.com

Ontario outings

Family-friendly fun

- Enjoy a slew of family-friendly winter activities at Peterborough's Winter Carnival on Jan. 17. Begin your day with a free Snofest Pancake Breakfast, then take part in snow soccer and hockey shootouts. Head indoors to wander the town's museum or compete for a $50 prize at the family snowman competition. For more details visit peterborough snofest.ca.

Snow sculpting

- Watch ice sculptors from around the world turn eight-foot columns of snow into art before your very eyes at the Sarnia Snowfest at Centennial Park from Jan. 14-18. There will also be ice carving demonstrations and kids' activities such as the Abra-KID-abra Children's show. Visit snow-sculpting.com/sarnia event.

Winter sport getaway

- Take a weekend off and head to Tyrolean Village Resorts at Blue Mountain for some sporty fun: Snow tubing, skating, snowmobiling, skiing and snowboarding are all offered at one location. In the evening, settle into your chalet's sauna, Jacuzzi or hot tub. Rates range from $880 to $2,200 per chalet and include two nights. Call 705-445-1467 for other package deals.

Pond hockey and ice fishing

- Escape to Haliburton to enjoy a relaxing winter weekend. Spend time with the family around a cosy wood stove, or lace up your skates for a game of pond hockey. Try ice fishing in one of their heated huts or learn the sport of luging, a one-person sled race down a chute. When the day is over, take a break in a hot tub. Call 1-888-368-3147 for details.

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New slogan for L.A.
Los Angeles has unveiled a new marketing campaign built around the slogan "That's So LA" to keep tourists coming despite the widespread economic turndown. The campaign will feature ads spotlighting unique sites in the city, its major attractions and images of celebrities. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Avoiding the celebration hangover in Quebec City

Quebec City reeled in tourists by the hundreds of thousands in 2008 as it pulled off a tremendous string of celebratory feats for its yearlong, 400th birthday bash.

The plan for year No. 401? Avoid the hangover.

In 2008, the fortified city overlooking the St. Lawrence River lured visitors to watch the planet's largest multimedia exhibition on a 600-metre-long projection surface.

Thousands more streamed through the local fine-arts museum, where 250 carefully selected works from Paris' illustrious Louvre were on display.

And close to half a million partiers shook the Plains of Abraham at separate concerts headlined by knighted rock hero Paul McCartney and homegrown pop star Celine Dion.

Really, how could any town ever expect to top all that?

According to the local tourism department, the city, which long ago elbowed onto top-10 lists of North America's best destinations, won't have to.

"People like to come here," said Daniel Gagnon, the department's communications director. "They liked it before 2008 and they will like it in 2009."

Gagnon admits 2009 won't stir up the same tourist bucks as last year, but he said there are still plenty of activities to attract out-of-towners.

The region's tourism industry hopes so, too.

Thanks to the anniversary party, business at Quebec City hotels shot up by 11 per cent last year, said Brian Aube, general manager of the Quebec Region Hotel Association.

"We had a great 2008, so we can't complain about that," said Aube, whose organization represents 95 per cent of the hotels in and around Quebec City.

This year, local hoteliers are hoping the region's long-standing bread-and-butter attractions — most of which are tied to history, religion and romance — will lure visitors from the nearby markets of New England, Ontario and the Maritimes.

He said people generally stay closer to home during tough economic times, a fact that Quebec City aims to take advantage of — especially if fuel prices remain low.

The city's tourism department even launched a major ad campaign geared for the university crowds in Boston, which is about 600 kilometres south of Quebec City.

JACQUES BOISSINOT/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quebec City event organizers hope they'll still be able to pull in out-of-town visitors like Wiggs and Martha Civitillo of West Hartford, Conn. — seen skating by the Chateau Frontenac in this file photo — a year after the city's elaborate year-long 400th bash.

Organizers hope to woo young adrenalin addicts to events such as the rough-and-tumble Red Bull Crashed Ice downhill ice-skating race on Jan. 24 and February's Snowboard Jamboree.

The area is renowned for its wintry offerings, including ski hills, the iconic Carnaval de Quebec and stunning ice hotel.

But Aube said the region is also known for its popular summer festival, the Village Vacances Valcartier water park, the rich history of Old Quebec and the 350-year-old shrine in nearby Ste-Anne-de-Beaupre.

To keep the 400th birthday momentum rolling, the city allocated $8.5 million of its 2009 budget to produce free events throughout the year.

In 2008, with the help of the provincial and federal governments, the city had $90 million of celebration funds at its disposal.

Gagnon said the city plans to bring back a new version of Robert Lepage's Image Mill, the wildly popular outdoor multimedia show that was beamed onto the side of 81 grain silos every night at the harbourfront.

Quebec City Tourism estimates 600,000 people took in Lepage's exhibition, which rolled sights and sounds from the city's colourful history into a 40-minute production.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

On the web

The Image Mill
• lacaserne.net/index2.php/other_projects/
Red Bull Crashed Ice
• redbullcrashedice.ca
Carnaval de Quebec
• carnaval.qc.ca
Snowboard Jamboree
• snowjamboree.com

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Metro Workology exclusive: Curtain Call

Don't miss Curtain Call, Metro's exclusive feature series in the Workology section. In the realm of death there are some interesting, lucrative and mysterious career opportunities; we will be digging up the stories for you, so check for Workology on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays and Metronews.ca/work as well.

Workology

CENTENNIAL COLLEGE Centennial College

EDITOR: DOUGLAS DUNLOP, DOUGLAS.DUNLOP@METRONEWS.CA

As much opportunity as training in pathology

Curtain Call

JON TATTRIE
for Metro Canada

It's a long road from watching CSI to becoming a forensic pathologist. After a four-year undergraduate degree, usually in the sciences, students must complete four years of medical school and then a five-year residency in forensic pathology. That's 13 years of expensive education, but rewarding for those who stick to it, says Dr. Michael Shkrum, head of the Specialty Committee for Forensic Pathology at the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.

"We're really hanging on by our fingernails at the various units across the province."
Dr. Michael Shkrum on the forensic pathologist shortage

"You have to have a healthy sense of scientific and intellectual curiosity and be willing to sort through some very difficult problems."

The training includes autopsies, microscopic assessments of specimens removed during surgery and cytology, the study of cells.

Until 2003, there were no accredited residency training programs in Canada, so pathologists went to the U.S. or the U.K. The Royal College now recognizes forensic pathology as a specialty and students can train in Toronto, with other centres to follow.

"We're hoping that program will generate at least two formally trained Canadian pathologists on a yearly basis," said Shkrum, who practices at the London Health Sciences Centre in Ontario. The training likely will stay in big cities like Toronto so students can become experts in a wide range of cases.

"There are very exacting legal standards that have to be addressed, because the work of a forensic pathologist can be presented in court," he said.

There aren't a lot of forensic pathologists in Canada, Shkrum said, but plenty of work. "We're really hanging on by our fingernails at the various units across the province. They're undermanned and there's a large volume of cases that comes through."

Many work in hybrid positions, doing surgical pathology and cytology along with forensic pathology.

"We're seeing some very horrendous, heart-rending cases," Shkrum cautioned, saying professional detachment is essential. "We deal with a lot of people who died unexpectedly. These are (often) young people who are cut down in their prime."

Cheaters, fraudsters, thieves, we'll catch 'em

Curtain Call

RAFAEL BRUSILOW
for Metro Canada

RAFAEL BRUSILOW/FOR METRO CANADA

Private investigator and president of The Investigators Group, Bill Joynt, in his office.

Insurance fraudsters, cheating spouses and thieving business partners – Bill Joynt has seen, and caught, them all.

As a private investigator with more than two decades of experience, 53-year-old Joynt has pretty much done it all, from going undercover with pinhole cameras to engineering movie-style police shakedowns on large theft operations. He has even dressed up as a fake CEO — in the fake office of a fake company — to catch a corporate executive suspected of selling company secrets.

Today Joynt is president of private investigations firm The Investigators Group Inc. in Toronto, covering all aspects of investigation from fraud and theft to evidence collection and domestic cases.

Joynt has assisted police investigations in the past, though these days he has traded in field work for the somewhat less exciting world of the office boardroom. He says the best part of his job is the variety.

"I enjoy it because it's different every day. You meet different people all the time and you're helping people out of very different situations," Joynt said.

While Joynt doesn't generally consider his job dangerous, he has been in his share of hair-raising situations. He once had a suspect drop a television set aimed at his head from a balcony of an apartment building and in one undercover case he sat down in a room of potential murder suspects around a coffee table covered in loaded guns.

"It's fun actually catching them, proving that someone is responsible for something wrong."
Private investigator Bill Joynt

These days many of the cases Joynt takes on end up being related to fraud or theft, particularly on the corporate scale. One case Joynt remembers fondly from his undercover days involved catching an executive who was selling secrets from his former employers despite having signed a non-competition contract upon leaving the firm. Joynt created an elaborate hoax to trap the executive into spilling the beans on-camera.

"We had fake financial records, a fake office, a fake secretary and we had the whole place wired for video and sound," Joynt said.

As for domestic cases, while Joynt says the stereotypical cases of spousal cheating do crop up, more common investigations revolve around far more serious issues, such as child endangerment in custody disputes or fraudulent claims around child support.

Joynt says the rush that comes with rooting out liars, cheaters and thieves is often its own reward.

"It's fun actually catching them, proving that someone is responsible for something wrong," Joynt said.

Yet, one of Joynt's proudest cases involved helping clear the name of wrongfully convicted scrapyard owner Chris Bates of a murder charge in Cowansville, Que., in 1998. Joynt and his business partner Sean Gladney discovered powerful evidence that exonerated Bates and pointed to two other men as the culprits. The lesson, Joynt says, is that the truth is worth pursuing.

For more of the Curtain Call exclusive series check the Workology section Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays or stop by Metronews.ca/work

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Cape Breton University may sell Picasso sketchbook
Cape Breton University is considering selling a Pablo Picasso sketchbook, one of the most valued pieces in its permanent collection. The sketchbook was donated to the university in 1996 by an anonymous donor. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Dance helped keep him off the street

So You Think You Can Dance Canada judge Luther Brown opens up to Metro

RAFAEL BRUSILOW
for Metro Canada

Luther Brown knows exactly how much hard work it takes to get successful.

The popular judge on the hit show So You Think You Can Dance Canada (SYTYCD Canada) is a self-taught, self-built success story who had to work hard for the success he now enjoys as choreographer, business owner and TV personality.

Brown, 34, started out as a kid just trying to feed his passion for dance in Toronto's Jane and Finch neighbourhood.

"I started in the hallways in the basement of my building, doing steps with my dance crew. I would always be writing stories and plays and putting dance in. I didn't even know what the term choreography meant — I was just the dance crew leader," Brown said.

PHOTO SUBMITTED

Luther Brown says his home life instilled in him the importance of helping out his community.

Brown says his home life instilled in him the importance of helping out his community, with his dad, a teacher, and his mother, a minister. Brown started working at the Driftwood Community Centre, running plays and dance troupes to help kids like him find a positive outlet for their energy and keep them out of trouble.

"It took us off the street doing it, and it took a lot of kids off the street. Just seeing some of these kids who nobody would take to open up, that was rewarding," Brown said.

Brown took the dance groups he formed at Driftwood and eventually created Do Dat Entertainment in 1997, eventually becoming a leading development centre for performers of all kinds in Toronto. Famous Do Dat alumni include R&B singer Shawn Desman and choreographer Tanisha Scott, known for her work with Alicia Keys and Sean Paul.

"I used to run home from church to watch her videos on MuchMusic."
Luther Brown on working with his childhood idol Janet Jackson

Singer/songwriter Jully Black is one of Brown's closest friends and he says growing up in Jane and Finch together taught them to support each other.

"We both kept each other focused. It's really good to see how people's lives have blossomed after what we started back in the day," Brown said.

Brown says the moment he realized he'd "made it" was when he got to work with Janet Jackson, one of his childhood idols.

"I used to run home from church to watch her videos on MuchMusic. I've ended up working with a lot of people who we used to rehearse to as kids," he said.

Judging on SYTYCD Canada was a blast as well as a challenge for Brown.

"The experience has been unbelievable. It tests you on every level and it's bringing your face across every television," he said.

Brown's advice to performers in the same shoes he started out in is to aim high and never let up.

"Dream big and it'll happen. You can't get full-time results from part-time effort," Brown said.

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• Where there is no signed employment agreement, employers are held to a number of implied terms. These include the implied rule, from which constructive dismissal arises, that the contract's fundamental terms will not be altered without the employee's consent; the rule, from which discrimination claims arise, that human rights and other employment standards legislation are automatically included as a term of employment; and, not least, the requirement that gives rise to wrongful dismissal claims, that employees must receive reasonable notice of their dismissal.

• If there is a written contract, it must also meet a number of tests. The employee must, at least, be given the opportunity to negotiate the terms, or those that are punitive may not be enforced later on. This rule applies during the course of employment, except that something of greater value must also be offered, such as a raise or a promotion. Otherwise, the courts have reasoned, an employer could unilaterally impose new terms, and an employee would be left without the leverage to negotiate.

• Where an agreement departs from fairness and morality, courts will intervene. This most often occurs with terms surrounding termination. If those terms amount to something far less than what the employee would have otherwise received, the courts can turn to a number of exceptions (and in law there is always an exception) to provide a better level of protection.

• During the course of employment, where management's conduct causes an employee to simply pack up and leave, it is not a true resignation but a dismissal and therefore, entitled to severance.

• Dismissal for cause, known as capital punishment in employment law, must be based on only the most serious forms of misconduct. If a contract can be terminated at an employer's discretion then employers could simply allege cause in order to avoid paying severance, the courts have argued. As a result, even dishonesty or incompetence may have to be tolerated or it might be second guessed by the courts.

• There is an obligation to fire employees "nicely." In its Wallace decision, the Supreme Court found the defendant's conduct in handling a dismissal was so cruel that normal employment law damages, which indemnify lost salary only, would not adequately compensate Wallace for his distress. With the stroke of a pen, the duty of good faith then became the law of land.

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Daniel A. Lublin is an employment lawyer focusing on the law of dismissal; dan@toronto-employmentlawyer.com.

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Howie hospitalized
Howie Mandel was hospitalized in Toronto on Monday with an irregular heartbeat, his publicist said. The 53-year-old comedian was in Canada taping his new show Howie Do It. He was released yesterday. MSN.COM

Entertainment

CSI guest star
Singer Taylor Swift will guest star in an upcoming episode of CSI: Crime Scene Investigation. Taylor will play Haley Jones, a teen whose family runs a seedy Vegas motel. MSN.COM

EDITOR: DEAN LISK, DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA

Every dog has its day

STEVE GOW
for Metro Canada

Thor Freudenthal might possibly be the most ironic person to direct the new family comedy Hotel for Dogs.

"I'm personally kind of a cat person but I found that putting a camera on a cat makes the cat look bored," said the director while promoting the film recently in L.A. "Dogs are always participating in something, they're so expressive and I think that's why they're great for the screen."

There's no disputing that argument. From Marley & Me to last year's Beverly Hills Chihuahua, canines have never had such a presence in family-based entertainment. For Freudenthal, the reason became clear while making Hotel for Dogs, which opens in theatres this Friday.

"There's this bond unlike any other bond between a dog and a human being," said Freudenthal. "There's that innocent quality to them that has no agenda but to please us or give love in a way."

"It's a common interest too," added star Emma Roberts. "Even if two people are completely opposite, you can bond over (dogs)."

Emma Roberts and Jake T. Austin star in Hotel for Dogs, which opens on Friday.

In the film, Roberts plays a foster child who, along with her brother (Jake T. Austin), discovers an abandoned hotel and transform it into a majestic home for all the homeless mutts they can manage. But that doesn't mean things were especially friendly on-set. With more than 60 dogs running around, each with their own trainer, making Hotel for Dogs would be considered anything but domestic bliss. "We did have a couple of instances where we had a lot of them in one room and there was either a little fight breaking out or somebody got a little too hungry," laughed Freudenthal.

Bollywood goes global

CHRIS ALEXANDER
for Metro Canada

Even though it has remained the world's most prolific filmmaking machine for more than 50 years, the wild world of the Bollywood movie is generally unknown to most mainstream North American viewers.

Chandni Chowk to China aims to change all that. The epic, big budget kung-fu comedy — it opens Friday — marks the first time major U.S. studio Warner Bros. has co-produced a completely Hindi-language picture (other studios Fox, Sony and Disney have similarly begun investing in Bollywood ventures) and expectations are high.

"This is a very big deal for Bollywood films because it exposes us on a global level," says Bollywood superstar and Chandni Chowk to China lead actor, Akshay Kumar. American and British cinema has incorporated elements and trappings of the Bollywood style for years (Danny Boyle's Slumdog Millionaire stands as a recent commercially and critically successful example) but Chandni Chowk to China is the real deal. In it, Kumar stars as hapless Delhi veggie slicer Sidhu who, mistaken for the re-incarnation of a legendary warrior, is whisked away to China to do battle with an evil crime boss named Hojo — played by Kung Fu movie icon Gordon Liu.

SHEENA SIPPY PHOTO

Sidhu (Akshay Kumar) expresses himself in dance in the action comedy Chandni Chowk to China.

Movie **feature**

Not only is CC2C the biggest internationally exposed Indian film in history — with over 140 prints in North America alone — but its production also marks the first time any movie from any country has been allowed to film on the ancient Great Wall of China.

"Not only did we shoot on the wall," says Kumar, "but we were, kicking, jumping and throwing people around with cables and cranes. It was incredible and a great privilege."

In true Bollywood fashion, Chandni Chowk to China runs almost three hours long and is packed to the bursting point with slapstick comedy, maudlin drama, jaw dropping action, heart throbbing romance … and of course, those outrageously colourful, slickly choreographed musical numbers that have endeared — and confused — so many filmgoers.

"In a Hollywood movie, emotions are shown subtly but in a Bollywood movie, when somebody feels love, we go on to a bridge and dance and yell 'I love her and she loves me so lets have a song.' We're loud that way."

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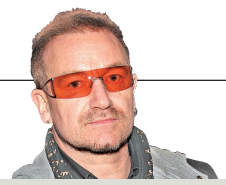

Big promises

U2 says its new tour will be a "feat of genius." The Irish rockers says the have been secretly creating a technologically-advanced stage set for when they hit the road later this year, and have promised fans something spectacular. **FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK**

Slumdog, WALL-E big winners

The ceremony had yet to begin, but this arrivals line felt more like an afterparty.

The red carpet leading into the Los Angeles Film Critics Association awards on Monday was packed with winners from Sunday's Golden Globes, where the Mumbai-set drama Slumdog Millionaire emerged the big victor, earning four statuettes.

The Indian star of Slumdog, Freida Pinto, said she wished she was already back home.

"If there was no Mumbai, there would be no Slumdog," Pinto said. "I would love to see how Indians are celebrating, because I know they are definitely rooting for us. Can't wait to go back."

The film's composer, Indian music superstar A.R. Rahman, said his Golden Globe win was followed by a call from his wife in India.

"She was screaming with joy," Rahman said. "I spoke to my mother and my family and my kids, and friends. In fact, the whole film community. All of them are so excited."

all the winners

- Picture: Wall-E
- Director: Danny Boyle, Slumdog Millionaire
- Actor: Sean Penn, Milk
- Actress: Sally Hawkins, Happy-Go-Lucky
- Supporting actor: Heath Ledger, The Dark Knight
- Supporting actress: Penelope Cruz, Vicky Cristina Barcelona and Elegy
- Screenplay: Mike Leigh, Happy-Go-Lucky
- Foreign-language film: Still Life
- Documentary: Man on Wire
- Animation: Waltz With Bashir
- Cinematography: Yu Lik Wai, Still Life
- Production design: Mark Friedberg, Synecdoche, New York
- Music/score: A.R. Rahman, Slumdog Millionaire
- New Generation: Steve McQueen, Hunger
- Douglas E. Edwards independent/experimental film/video: James Benning, RR and Casting a Glance
- Documentary: Man on Wire

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The group named Disney/Pixar's WALL-E the best feature film of 2008, live, animated or otherwise.

"For us, this is historic," said WALL-E director Andrew Stanton, who also was among Sunday's Globe winners. "I mean, we've been striving since Toy Story to have our films be seen just like any other film. And we've tried very hard to raise the bar and make the content that good, so that might happen. And to finally have that happen, it's huge. It's like we finally broke some glass ceiling. It's just really gratifying."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

"For us, this is historic. I mean, we've been striving since Toy Story to have our films be seen just like any other film ... It's like we finally broke some glass ceiling."
WALL-E director Andrew Stanton

In brief

VIEWERS The Golden Globe Awards broadcast grabbed the largest audience in Canada of any program Sunday night but it was still down from 2007 — 1.8 million viewers, down from 2.6 million — the last time the awards show ran in its usual format. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

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Inauguration music

Sunday's celebration will feature top lineup

Judging by the lineup, Sunday's inaugural celebration for Barack Obama at the Lincoln Memorial is a coveted gig for music's top names.

Beyonce, Bono, Bruce Springsteen, John Mellencamp, Usher, Shakira, Sheryl Crow, Josh Groban and James Taylor are among the musicians scheduled to perform Sunday afternoon. The president-elect and his family are due to attend, with Obama expected to speak.

Other performers include Stevie Wonder, Renee Fleming, Garth Brooks, Mary J. Blige, Herbie Hancock, Heather Headley, John Legend and Jennifer Nettles. Historical passages will be read by Jamie Foxx, Martin Luther King III, Queen Latifah and Denzel Washington, with other celebrities expected to join them.

After getting the go-ahead from the Presidential Inaugural Committee two and a half weeks ago to put the show together, executive producer George Stevens Jr. said he quickly learned it would not be like any other special event he's tried to book.

United States
Presidential
Inauguration

"On that first day, we asked Springsteen, Bono and Garth Brooks within a period of 45 minutes and got three 'yeses,'" Stevens said. "We said, 'This is going to be fun.'"

Stevens said he tried to reach out to a diversity of artists. The theme for the show, titled We Are One: The Obama Inaugural Celebration at the Lincoln Memorial, is less about celebration than national unification.

"The list of stars is impressive," he said. "But this is not a show biz, glitzy occasion. It's going to be rooted in history, remembering the great president (Lincoln) who led us through difficult times."

The artists won't be performing their big hits, but will be asked to perform material appropriate to the occasion.

HBO will televise the event at 7 p.m. EST.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Left: Bono and Sheryl Crow are just two of the many celebrities due to attend Barack Obama's inaugural celebration.

Angelou will tune into ceremonies

Angelou

PEOPLE Poet Maya Angelou, who recited one of her works at Bill Clinton's first inauguration, won't be on hand when Barack Obama takes the oath of office. But she says she won't miss a minute of it.

Angelou, 80, said she'll be at her home in Winston-Salem, N.C., next Tuesday, watching the ceremonies on television.

"I shall enjoy those and not miss one flicker of the camera. Not one flick," she told the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette. "I shall be somewhere between crying and praying and being grateful and laughing when I see faces I know."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

In brief

BOOKS Chris Rock is making a comeback, as an author. Grand Central Publishing says Rock's new book — not yet titled — will be full of "comedic observations." It's tentatively scheduled for release next year.

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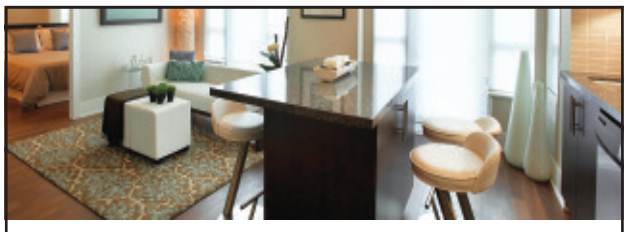

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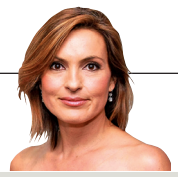
Sick star stays on the job
Law & Order: SVU star Mariska Hargitay has a partially collapsed lung, but won't miss any work, according to her rep. **PEOPLE.COM**



Upcoming season shaping up

IntelleVision

Rick McGinnis
rick.mcginnis@metronews.ca

Cancelling Prison Break at the end of the current season is hardly unexpected.

WHAT'S NEXT: The next few months in TV are starting to take vague shape with a few announcements from networks, including the return of Ray Romano to primetime in a "dramedy" exploring the midlife crisis of a group of fortysomething buddies.

The show, titled Men Of A Certain Age, was greenlit for an initial 10 episodes by TNT according to a story in the Hollywood Reporter, and will also star Andre Braugher (star of Gideon's Crossing, a shortlived spinoff of The Practice) and Scott Bakula. Think Bromance with a lot of prostate jokes.

Fox will be bringing back 'Til Death with a full 22-episode order for next season, a surprise revival of the sitcom that will bring the show's total to more than 80 episodes — enough to bring it to syndication, according to a TVGuide.com story, though only seven of the current season's episodes aired when it disappeared from the air in October.

Which reminds us of the rule that the only thing about Fox you can trust is its unpredictability. Cancelling Prison Break at the end of the current season is hardly unexpected, however — the show long ago exhausted its premise, which was never more than miniseries-sized. "The show is just played out," Fox entertainment president Kevin Reilly told the Hollywood Reporter. "Creatively everybody feels enough stories have been told ... we want to finish strong and not just gimp-out next season."

Reilly did say that a few extra episodes could be shot to pad out the four remaining set to air. The network has a new animated comedy from Arrested Development creator Mitch Hurwitz, Sit Down, Shut Up, ready to take over King Of The Hill's Sunday evening slot when that show leaves the air in April, and high hopes that they can make Friday night a testosterone-friendly one when they pair up Joss Whedon's troubled Dollhouse with Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles.

It might just work, if Reilly can convince Whedon's geeky fan base that going out of Friday night is for jocks, or break their TiVos if they insist on having a social life.

Rick McGinnis writes about music, movies, books and television, but not opera.

Rape victim wants charge dropped

COURTS The woman who was raped by fugitive director Roman Polanski three decades ago when she was 13 has lashed out at the Los Angeles County district attorney's office. Forty-five-year-old Samantha Geimer says in a legal declaration that she's being harmed by renewed focus on what happened to her. Geimer says she's willing to appear in court, if Polanski cannot, to urge dismissal of the charge that led him to flee the country. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

In brief

RESTRAINING ORDER Jennifer Love Hewitt has won a three-year restraining order against a 62-year-old man she says has been stalking her, court records show.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GlobalStyle

Kenya Hunt
Metro World News fashion correspondent

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1/14/09	primetime	265	353	2	TVO	Galapagos (Part 2 of 3)		The Agenda With Steve Paikin		The Human Camera (N)		Secret Life of the Brain		Agenda-Paikin
		211	331	3	GTV	ET Canada	Entertainment	The Guard "Body Parts"		The Unit "Sudden Flight"		House		News (N)
		215	343	4	OMN1	Two/Half Men	The Simpsons	News (N)		Vivere Il	News (N)	The Simpsons	King of the Hill	Metropia
		210	302	6	CBC	Coronation St.	Jeopardy! (N)	Hockeyville 2009 (N)		CBC News: the fifth estate		CBC News: The National		The Hour
		214	344	7	CITY	Law & Order: SVU		13: Fear Is Real (N)		Hates Chris	Friends	I Love Money		News (N)
		212	313	8	CTV	etalk	Hollywood	American Idol (HDTV) (N)				CSI: NY "Help" (N)		News (N)
		218	345	11	E!	The Insider (N)	E! News	Knight Rider (HDTV) (N)		True Hollywood Story				News (N)
		137	763	13	TFO	Panorama		L'Inquisition révélée		*L'Échine du diable* ★★★ (2001, Suspense) Marisa Paredes.				Évolution
		-	-	14	-	Cold Case		News (N)		News (N)		Two/Half Men	King	Cold Case
		213	326	15	SUN	Scrubs	George Lopez	Salute Petra: A Tribute to Luciano Pavarotti (N)				To Serve and Protect		Becker
		-	387	16	CBS	Inside Edition	Hollywood	Old Christine	Gary Unmarr	Criminal Minds (N)		CSI: NY "Help" (N)		News (N)
		-	385	17	NBC	The Insider (N)	Entertainment	Knight Rider (HDTV) (N)		Law & Order: SVU		Law & Order (HDTV) (N)		News (N)
		-	386	18	ABC	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Lost (HDTV) Confrontation between the survivors and the freighter people begins.						News
		219	346	20	ACH-B	Instant Star	TMZ (N)	Lost (HDTV) Confrontation between the survivors and the freighter people begins.						News (N)
		-	-	28	FOX	Judge Judy (N)	Two/Half Men	American Idol (HDTV) (N)				Seinfeld	Two/Half Men	The Simpsons
		-	388	61	PBS	News-Lehrer	Vicar of Dibley	Windsors-Royal		Make 'em Laugh: The Funny Business of America (N)				Business Rpt.
		297	652	330	WPX	Two/Half Men	Family Guy	13: Fear Is Real (N)		90210 (HDTV)		PIX News at Ten Tong.		Two/Half Men
		296	654	331	SBK	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Dr. Phil (HDTV) (N)		College Basketball Wake Forest at Boston College. (Live)				Punk'd
		298	653	332	TLA	Jamie Foxx	Wayans Bros.	My Wife-Kids	According-Jim	Family Guy	Family Guy	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	13: Fear-Real
	news	502	390	26	NW	CBC News	Newman	The Hour Dave Salmoni.		CBC News: The National		Lost at Sea (N)		National
		500	500	33	CNN	Lou Dobbs Tonight		Campbell Brown: No Bias		Larry King Live		Anderson Cooper 360 (HDTV)		
		509	504	79	CNB	CNBC Reports (HDTV)				American Greed (N)		On the Money		Mad Money
	sports	405	417	22	net	CHL Hockey 2009 Home Hardware CHL/NHL Top Prospects Game. From Oshawa, Ont. (Live)						Sportsnet Connected		Hockey Central
		400	400	30	TSN	That's Hockey!	NHL Hockey Ottawa Senators at Atlanta Thrashers. (HDTV) (Live)					SportsCentre (HDTV) (Live)		
		411	457	58	OLN	Bounty Hunter	Dakar Rally	Survivorman		Mantracker		Bounty Hunter	Dakar Rally	Survivorman
		417	406	81	SC	Barrett-Jackson Automobile Auction (HDTV) Wednesday action from Scottsdale, Ariz. (Live)								
	family	551	542	25	YTV	Scorpion	Prank Patrol	Malcolm-Mid.	Futurama	Adrenaline Proj	Prank Patrol	Falcon Beach		Mystery Hnt.
		554	544	45	TEL	Totally Spies	Total Drama	6teen	6teen	Misadventures	Futurama	The Critic	Robot Chicken	Bromwell High
		556	540	51	FAM	Wizards-Place	That's-Raven	Zack & Cody	Natural-Sadie	Han. Montana	Life Derek	Ned's School	Cory in House	Zack & Cody
	cable variety	602	567	27	W	Will & Grace	Friends	Grocery Bag	Grocery Bag	How Clean	Too Posh	Maxed Out (N)	Maxed Out	Maxed Out
		570	580	29	MM	So You Think You Can Dance				So You Think You Can Dance		disBand	disBand	PunchMuch
		615	520	31	A&E	CSI: Miami		Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Dog the Bounty Hunter		Parking Wars	Parking Wars	Parking Wars
		700	800	35	TLN	Centrovetrine	Sky TG 24	Un Ciclone In Famiglia 2				Raymond	Raymond	George Lopez
		571	581	36	MMM	mmmtop	MusicProfile	Where You At	Revival	Back In	Back In	All-Time Top 10		Fabulous Life
		575	583	38	CMT	CMT's Greatest		Home Improve.	Home Improve.	Reba	Reba	Hope & Faith	Hope & Faith	Totally
		616	521	39	SHO	The Outer Limits		About a Girl	About a Girl	The Guard (HDTV)		Big Love (HDTV)		House
		620	523	40	BVO	The Achievers	Landscape	Arts & Minds	Bravo!Videos	Wingfield	Wingfield	Stones and the Ocean		Law & Order
		601	562	41	SLC	Til Debt-Part	Rich Poor	X-Weighted "Jamila"		Real Housewives of OC		Filthy Rich: Cattle Drive		ET Canada
		522	506	43	HIS	NCIS		Cities of the Underworld		The Real Da Vinci Code		NCIS		Unlocking-Past
		625	548	44	COM	Air Farce	Just for Laughs		Corner Gas	The Simpsons	South Park	Comedy Inc.	RENO 911!	Daily Show
		600	564	46	H&G	House Hunters	Property Virgin	Mansions	Property Shop	Property Virgin	Unsellable	Hid Potential	Really Big Flip	Holmes-Homes
		294	529	47	TBS	House-Payne	House-Payne	*A Simple Plan* ★★ (1998, Suspense) Bill Paxton, Billy Bob Thornton.					Seinfeld	Family Guy
		576	582	49	BET	106 & Park	Notorious-Drm	*You Got Served* ★★ (2004, Drama) Marques Houston.				Keyshia Cole	Brother	Judge Hatchett
		627	528	50	SPC	Lost		Lost "Ji Yeon"		The Dresden Files		Rabbit Fall	Rabbit Fall	Stargate SG-1
		581	566	52	MTV	Mom & Dad	After	MTV News	Cribs	The Real World		The Real World		MTV Live
		618	524	54	TROP	Reality	Ad Persuasion	Family Guy	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Raymond	Family Guy	Married... With	Seinfeld
		603	561	56	FOOD	Chef at Home	Chef at Home	Restaurant Makeover		Iron Chef America		Top Chef Farm dinner.		Restaurant
		261	394	60	V	Murder, She Wrote		Summer Wine	Dinnerladies	Darling Buds of May		The Nature of Things Intuition.		Poltergeist
		621	527	63	STR	The Ellen DeGeneres Show (N)		TMZ (N)	etalk	Blush: Make-Up Artist		The Tonight Show-Jay Leno		TMZ
		553	546	65	TRE	Wonder Pets	Nght Grdn	Friend Rabbit	Franklin	Little Bear	Miss Spider	Comfy Couch	Rolie Polie Olie	Max & Ruby
		115	711	101	TVA	Poule-oeufs or	Sketch Show	Destinées (HDTV) (N) (SC)		Deux filles le matin (SC)		TVA 22 heures	(10:45) Denis Lévesque	
		126	730	102	RDI	24 Heures en 60 minutes		Grands reportages (SC)		Le Téléjournal (SC)		RDI en direct	Le National	Le Téléjournal
		526	507	249	VIVA	Judging Amy		The Power of Dreams (N)		The West Wing		Mediums	Psychic Detect	Mediums
		300	601	301	M1	*Mnt Pleas*	(7:25) *Grindstone Road* (2008)			*Gone Baby Gone* ★★★ (2007, Mystery) Casey Affleck.				*Quiet Man*
		305	612	306	PIX	(7:15) *Buster's Bedroom* ★★ (1991, Comedy-Drama)				*Legend* ★★ (1985, Fantasy) Tom Cruise.			H'wd Sptlght	*Prom Night III*

critics' corner

Anna and Kristina's Grocery Bag
Authentic, schmauthentic. Foreign cuisine evolves when it crosses oceans and borders; chop suey, for example, is a North American invention unheard of in China. Nevertheless, some foodies are into staying as true to the cuisine's roots as possible. To that end, this new episode finds Anna and Kristina on their way to Tuscany to find out whether the Italian cookbook they're reviewing is full of truly Italian recipes. 8 PM on W

Lost
The wait is almost over. And since it's been a while since we've been to the island, ABC reairs last season's finale to refresh fans' memories in anticipation of next week's season premiere. The season finale, which finds the survivors and the "freighter people" getting ready to rumble, clocks in at a whopping three hours. But it's worth it, at least in terms of drama. Matthew Fox and Jorge Garcia star in "There's No Place Like Home." 8 PM on ABC ACH-B

Wilson has baby name picked out

Carnie Wilson can get the personalized pillow ready — she's already picked her new baby's name, five months ahead of the impending delivery. "It's Luciana — but we'll call her Lucy," the singer tells The Bonnie Hunt Show. **PEOPLE.COM**

Celebrity Buzz

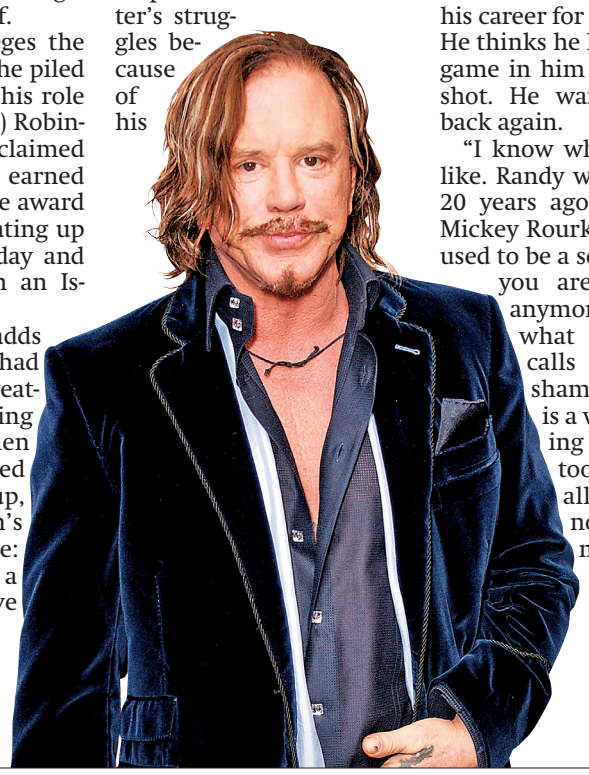
Did Rourke use steriods?

CAREER Femalefirst.co.uk is alleging that Mickey Rourke may have taken steroids for his role in The Wrestler, quoting a magazine article as proof.

The website alleges the actor has revealed he piled on the pounds for his role as Randy (The Ram) Robinson in the acclaimed movie — which earned him a Golden Globe award on Sunday — by eating up to seven meals a day and training hard with an Israeli cage fighter.

But the website adds Rourke may have had additional help creating his hulking physique. When asked if he used steroids to bulk up, Rourke told Men's Journal magazine: "When I'm a wrestler, I behave like a wrestler," the website alleges as proof.

The twice-divorced actor recently admitted he could empathize with his character's struggles because of his own turbulent life.



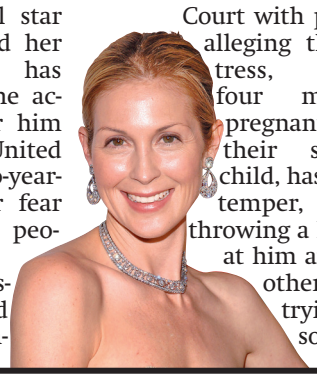
Rourke — who spent 15 years in the Hollywood wilderness — said: "Randy has been in the twilight of his career for several years. He thinks he has one more game in him — one more shot. He wants to come back again.

"I know what that feels like. Randy was somebody 20 years ago and so was Mickey Rourke. When you used to be a somebody and you aren't anybody anymore, you live in what my doctor calls a state of shame. Hollywood is a very unforgiving place, but I took a nosedive all by myself, no one pushed me."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Divorce gets ugly for Rutherford

DISPUTE The divorce action between Gossip Girl star Kelly Rutherford and her estranged husband has turned ugly, with the actress seeking to bar him from leaving the United States with their two-year-old son Hermès for fear they'll disappear, people.com reports.



The website says estranged husband David Giersch countered in L.A. Superior Court with papers alleging the actress, who's four months pregnant with their second child, has a bad temper, once throwing a laptop at him and another time trying to sock him with her fist.

Rutherford, 40, filed for divorce from Giersch, an entrepreneur, last month after being married a little over two years, seeking sole physical custody with monitored visitation. On the same day, Giersch filed for legal separation, seeking sole legal and physical custody with visitation for her.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Gisele, Brady engaged?

RELATIONSHIP Gisele Bundchen and Tom Brady are engaged, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The Brazilian model and American football star are set to wed after Brady got down on one knee and proposed with a diamond solitaire ring in Los Angeles on Friday, the website says.

Gisele's agent has refused to confirm the happy news, saying: "We don't comment on our clients' private lives."

The website quotes a source as saying: "He asked and she accepted. The couple are discussing a huge fashionista event in the spring or a more intimate and quicker ceremony in Costa Rica, where Gisele has a home."

Gisele — who has previously dated Revolutionary Road actor Leonardo DiCaprio and professional surfer Kelly Slater — allegedly began her relationship with Tom when he was still romantically involved with actress Bridget Moynahan.

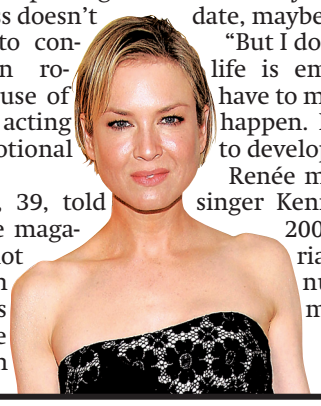
METRO NEWS SERVICES

GETTY IMAGES PHOTOS

Renée too busy for men

PEOPLE Renée Zellweger is too busy to have a boyfriend, femalefirst.co.uk is reporting.

The actress doesn't have time to concentrate on romance because of her hectic acting and promotional schedule.



Zellweger, 39, told Marie Claire magazine: "I'm not single, I'm busy. That's my line. The thing is, I'm away all the time. I suppose if I sat still long enough to get to know somebody beyond a dinner date, maybe.

"But I don't feel like my life is empty or that I have to make something happen. I have projects to develop."

Renée married country singer Kenny Chesney in 2005, but the marriage was annulled four months later.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Perry laments on heartache

PEOPLE Katy Perry let all her emotions hang out during an acoustic set at L.A.'s Hotel Cafe Monday night, people.com reports

"It hurts right now," People quotes the singer as saying about her recent split with boyfriend Travis McCoy.

"When you breakup with someone you move on," she said. "You don't really want to move on ... but you have to because they don't give you any choice," she added before declaring, "But I'm over it!"

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Cyrus wants to wed DiCaprio

PEOPLE Though she may be famously dating underwear model Justin Gaston — and is only 16 — teen superstar Miley Cyrus has her sights set on a new man.

According to Britain's Daily Star, while talking about going to the Golden Globes, Cyrus said, "I saw my husband, Leonardo DiCaprio. I didn't meet him. He doesn't know I'm his wife, but I will be one day."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

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The Weather Network 20 YEARS
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Today 60% Light snow -13°/ -25°

Thursday Partly cloudy -18° / -24°

Friday Flurries -11°/ -16°

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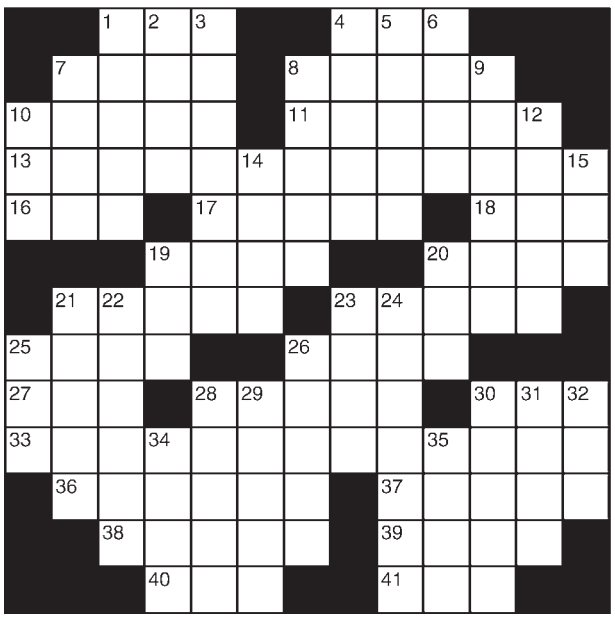
Take Five



Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

	1		9			8	3	
8				4		6		7
9				6				
	4	2			5		6	
				2				
	7		3			2	5	
				3				8
7		9		1				3
	5	3			8		2	

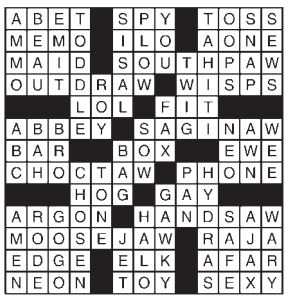
Crossword across

1 Ventilate
4 Be a couch potato
7 Peru's capital
8 Partook at a banquet
10 Man of morals?
11 Invest officially
13 Not mincing words
16 — out a living
17 Find
18 Water barrier
19 Cohort
20 Actress Sorvino
21 Diarist Samuel
23 Some silverware
25 Go limp
26 Strictly entre —
27 Blackbird
28 Off the perpendicular
30 Upper limit
33 Childhood game played in a circle
36 Buccaneer
37 Not as plentiful
38 Eldrick Woods
39 Sicilian spouter
40 Witness
41 Kid's query

Crossword down

1 Supermarket section
2 "No harm done"
3 Apace
4 Esthetic taste
5 Finish
6 Paraphernalia
7 Plumbing problem
8 Pooch
9 Small antelope
10 Noshed
12 Approaches
14 Rock guitarist Lofgren
15 Singer Sumac
19 Likely
20 "— Doubtfire"
21 Centerfold, maybe
22 Draw forth
23 Traditional music style
24 Got too big for
25 Bankroll
26 More pleasant
28 Old saw
29 Private student
30 Hackneyed
31 Cruising
32 Apiece
34 Singer-actor Kristofferson
35 Swearword

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:



1	6	5	3	8	4	9	2	7
8	3	2	7	9	6	4	5	1
4	7	9	5	2	1	6	3	8
5	9	8	1	7	2	3	4	6
3	4	7	6	5	9	1	8	2
6	2	1	4	3	8	5	7	9
7	8	6	9	4	3	2	1	5
2	1	3	8	6	5	7	9	4
9	5	4	2	1	7	8	6	3

Find today's answers + play more games at metronews.ca

SUDOKU SOLVE TIME:
Under 13 min .....Genius
13-17 min.....Scholar
17-21 min .....Smart
21-25 min .....Not bad
25+ min.....Keep practising

Metro Recipe of the Day

Salmon pizza with yogurt and dill

INGREDIENTS:
2 small skinless salmon fillets, about 3/4 lb (375 g) in total
2 large tomatoes
1 small mild white or red onion
2 thin 10-in. (25-cm) unbaked pizza crusts
Salt and black pepper
8 sprigs of fresh dill
6 oz (170 g) Greek yogourt
To serve: 4 tbsp (60 ml) mango chutney, optional

METHOD:
1. Preheat oven to 425°F (220°C). Remove bones from salmon fillets, then dice flesh.

2. Rinse, dry and finely chop tomatoes; peel and finely chop onion. Place pizza crusts on baking trays; spread tomatoes and onion over each. Arrange salmon on top and add salt and pepper to taste.

3. Bake for 15–20 minutes, or until lightly browned, swapping trays around half way through.

4. Rinse and dry dill. Set aside a few sprigs for a garnish, finely chop remainder, and mix into yogourt, with some pepper.

5. Remove pizzas from oven, spoon some yogourt over each and garnish with reserved dill.

6. Cut each salmon pizza into quarters and serve two portions per person, accompanied by mango chutney, if using.

SERVES 4

rd.ca
For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to **rd.ca** or check out **Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!**

Horoscopes

AVATAR VENUS

ARIES
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
You'll increase your confidence level. You'll smile through an ecstatic meeting. A playmate appeals to you for understanding.

TAURUS
APRIL 21-MAY 21
Move to a calmer and healthier place. Your ability to listen is enhanced. Don't get caught looking for a brilliant romance.

GEMINI
MAY 22-JUNE 21
Someone's modest secrets are about to be revealed. Scandal-talk will cause a dispute. Fearlessly adapting to new conditions takes time.

CANCER
JUNE 22-JULY 22
A cheeky cheerleader gets a payback. Displeasure forces a decision to be made. Unfaithfulness causes difficulties in a love life.

LEO
JULY 23-AUG 23
A door opens to a blast from the past. A passionate message is too tiring to deal with. Make an effort to avoid painful ailments.

VIRGO
AUG 24-SEPT 22
Your favourite visitor is arranging a flight. A new supporter bites off more than he can chew. Someone gives you the upper hand in a deal.

LIBRA
SEPT 23-OCT 23
A friend's clowning around should be encouraged. A seedy guy needs a helping hand. Lively people will have you pleading for rest.

SCORPIO
OCT 24-NOV 22
A rewarding message arrives in the afternoon. Honesty is the key in a compromise. A liar wins a game by telling the truth.

SAGITTARIUS
NOV 23-DEC 21
A lucky break cheers you up. Better info comes from an endearing woman. Someone will pester you with a cunning plan.

CAPRICORN
DEC 22-JAN 20
A protector has told a lie. A trail of evidence leads to a revelation. An ethical person will give you peace of mind.

AQUARIUS
JAN 21-FEB 18
Someone will take the flack for you. A friend is on the verge of asking for help. Somebody will show you the way to make progress.

PISCES
FEB 19-MARCH 20
You can start to set realistic goals. A humble person is a good organizer. Be kinder to an absentminded individual.

This day in history

JAN. 14, 1501: Martin Luther, age 17, enters the University of Erfurt.
JAN. 14, 1943: World War II: Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill begin the Casablanca Conference to discuss strategy and study the next phase of the war.
JAN. 14, 1999: Toronto, Ont., Mayor Mel Lastman to be the first mayor in Canada to call in the Army for shovelling perhaps the highest recorded amount of snow in Toronto History.
CORRECTION: Japan apologized for forcing Korean women into sexual slavery during World War II in 1992. The wrong year appeared in yesterday's This Day In History.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

WORDY GURDY®

BY TRICKY RICKY KANE

Every answer is a rhyming pair of words (like FAT CAT and DOUBLE TROUBLE), and they will fit in the letter squares. The number after the definition tells you how many syllables in each word.

1. Embrace a locust or beetle (1)
2. Scathingly criticize a play's players (1)
3. Sandwich shop spread in a PB&J (2)
4. Finger-jabs plain down-home people (1)
5. Not as strong athletic shoe (2)
6. Gave approval for an embossed fabric (2)
7. Flintstone's neighbor Barney's woes (2)

ANSWERS
1. HUG BUG 2. BLAST CAST 3. DELI JELLY 4. POKES FOLKS
5. WEAKER SNEAKER 6. OKAYED BROCADE 7. RUBBLES TROUBLES

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HWY: 7.5 L/100KM 38 MPG
CITY: 10.6 L/100KM 27 MPG

EX model shown

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- Available 7-seater
- Standard six airbags

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2009 Sportage

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NHTSA - Frontal and side impacts††

HWY: 7.8 L/100KM 36 MPG
CITY: 10.3 L/100KM 27 MPG

LX model shown

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